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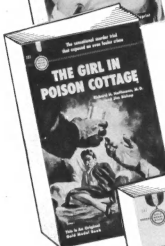
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CONTENTS

SPECIAL
HIGH ADVENTURE
PERSONALITIES
YOUR LIFE
FACT CRIME
SPORTS
PICTORIAL
STORIES FOR MEN
SHORT FEATURES
BONUS

OPERATION "NULLO"	Otis Carney	2
<i>The amazing story of our robot fleets—straight from the "Top Secret" list</i>		
WE SPEARED THE GIANT MANTA	Si Podolin	10
<i>The devilfish gave us a fight we will never forget</i>		
I HUNTED WITH AMERICA'S TOP OUTFITTER	Clyde Ormond	26
<i>Tex Ritter's service comes high—but it's worth it</i>		
ALLEN DULLES—AMERICA'S MASTER SPY	Martin L. Gross	22
<i>Our cloak-and-dagger chief is beating the Russians at their own game</i>		
ARE YOU A DRINKING DRIVER OR A DRUNKEN DRIVER?	Emile C. Schurmacher	14
<i>Here's what the law, and common sense, says you can have before you take the wheel</i>		
WHEN CONAN DOYLE PLAYED SHERLOCK HOLMES	Alan Hynd	6
<i>The great detective writer solved four cases that Scotland Yard muffed</i>		
THE CASE OF THE SOBBING OWL	William B. Hartley	30
<i>By day she killed her guests with kindness. By night she just plain killed them</i>		
BASEBALL'S BIGGEST LIE	Paul Gardner	35
<i>They don't like to tell the truth about the Yankees—but here it is</i>		
CONFERENCE		21
<i>Choice words from Marilyn Monroe</i>		
THE THIEF-TAKER	Gordon Schendel	18
<i>The manhunter wasn't after Brandon's head—just part of it</i>		
The Man Who Hanged His Son	43	
You Can Build This Convertible Couch	45	
The Officer Wore Diapers	47	



BEST-SELLING NOVEL COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE

Page 49

The Snatchers
by Lionel White

Cover by JOHN FLOHERTY, JR.

VOL. 2 NO. 3

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Operation "Nullo": **Flying Our Pilotless Planes**

No longer a total "Top Secret," what can be told about our robot air fleets points to a new, deadly push-button warfare

by Otis Carney



The pilotless B-61 "Matador," if fitted with an atomic warhead, can become one of our most deadly offensive weapons. Armchair pilots can guide it to any point on the earth.

The future use of the Armed Services' "drones"—midjet and life-size pilotless airplanes controlled by radio—is one of the most talked about, yet at the same time hush-hush projects our government is working on. But if a story that came out of the Korean War is any indication, these drones are destined to play an extremely important and deadly role in future wars.

The Korean story deals with a "nullo" plane (no live operator aboard)—an obsolete Navy fighter loaded with explosives and fitted with a television camera in its nose. Its "pilot" controlled the robot ship from a "mother" aircraft which was equipped with a television receiving set showing where the explosive-laden drone was heading. Carefully, the robot ship was steered toward its target, an enemy tunnel; then a flick of the control pilot's wrist sent it into a death dive which ended in a shattering explosion to conclude a highly successful mission.

In 1947, our Air Force tried something revolutionary. A plane equipped with special radio control units poised at the end of a runway ready for take-off—but it had no pilot. Once airborne, it broke out of the traffic pattern, climbed to altitude, leveled off and headed east. Many hours later it returned, landed and taxied to its regular position on the flight line. The plane had crossed the Atlantic and returned *without a pilot touching the controls.*

The Korean War experiment and the 1947 trans-Atlantic flight point to one thing: in the event of a third world war more advanced radio-controlled drones—versions of those now being designed and tested—will be a vital factor in this country's air defense and offense.

When our radar tells us that enemy fighters and bombers are approaching our coasts, sleek, pilotless planes of supersonic speeds will be sent up to intercept them. When we decide to bomb certain enemy countries, other nullo planes, fixed with atomic war heads, could be launched from ships, other aircraft or from the ground, and guided to their targets by armchair pilots. Farfetched? Maybe so, but no more than the name "Medium Bombardment Squadron (Pilotless)," two of which units the Air Force has in Cocoa, Florida where nullo flying is being researched and tested.

Presently, nullo flying is being done by a variety of

drones for many reasons. The planes fall into four groups: ground-to-air, ground-to-ground, air-to-air, air-to-ground.

The Boeing F-99, an Air Force ground-to-air pilotless plane, is the most recent of the nullo ships. Nicknamed the "Bomarc," it is a sleek interceptor about 16 feet long and capable of reaching speeds of more than 1,500 miles an hour. The Bomarc, along with more than 100 other supersonic killers, is designed to intercept enemy missiles, bombers and fighter ships attacking the United States.

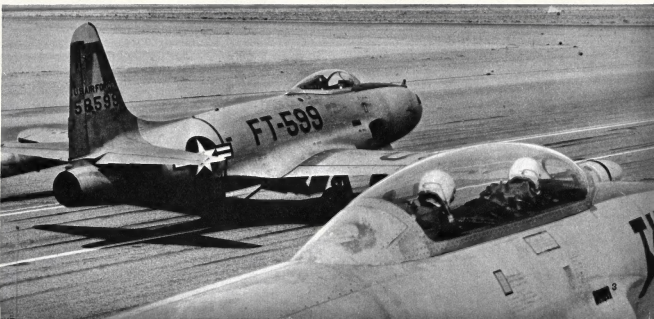
A near cousin of the F-99 is the Nike, an anti-aircraft ground-to-air missile that picks up the "scent" of enemy planes and automatically rams them. Like the F-99, the Nike explodes when it "homes in" on a ship, regardless of evasive action. Recently, a Nike anti-aircraft battery was installed at Fort George Meade, Md., to protect the Capital and the Baltimore area.

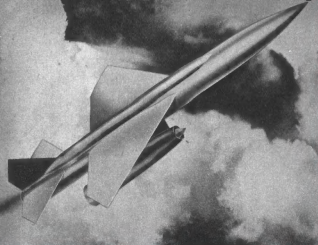
Another, and perhaps more deadly pilotless plane is the B-61 "Matador," which uses rocket power to assist its Turbojet on take-offs. This is a tactical ground-to-ground drone with a range of several hundred miles. Already in production, it can be launched from mobile carriers, loaded with atomic explosives and guided (within its range) to any point on earth. It's more deadly than the German V-2.

The QF-80, used primarily as a radiological research drone, is a life-size F-80 jet fighter equipped with special radio equipment which picks up signals from the "pilot's" beep-control box. It can be guided by armchair pilots on the ground or flying alongside the drone. Recently, two QF-80s were loaded with 120 mice and four monkeys and were flown through an atomic cloud to collect information on radiological hazards. This was done as part of a vast research program being carried out at the nuclear testing grounds in Nevada. The QF-80s have been reduced to perform such work horse tasks ever since the Armed Services began developing faster and more efficient nullo craft.

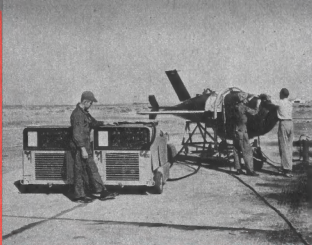
Although most of the pilotless planes now being designed and produced are shrouded by a veil of top secrecy, the Armed Services have released a wealth of information on the midgets of their nullo fleet. These are the highly

Radio-controlled QF-80 is flown through atomic clouds for radiological research. Pilot guides it from "mother" ship.





The Air Force's new F-99 "Bomarc" pilotless interceptor is a ground-to-air missile capable of speeds of more than 1,500 miles an hour. Other details about it are secret.



The Ryan "Firebee," operated by a turbo-jet, is the Armed Services' newest pilotless target plane. Ground and air gunners usually have poor luck trying to knock it down.



The "Beeper-box," which is used to control the flight of drones, is held in the "pilot's" lap. It has joystick and buttons for throttling, climbing and turning the planes.

Navy gunners attempt to shoot down drones like these during target practice. Some of the midget planes are operated by pulse-jet (in foreground), others by propeller.



maneuverable target drones currently being used to train radar trackers and gunners of the Air Force and Navy.

Ranging from 10 to 12 feet in length, the midget ships come in both propeller driven and pulse-jet forms. They fly at about 250 miles an hour, and can do everything an actual plane can—and some things, snap rolls for instance, even better. Navy and Air Force gunners are learning that the drone is perhaps the world's most shatterproof clay pigeon, having often flown through the combined flak of a battlewagon or carrier, to emerge untouched on the other side.

High Navy sources have acclaimed them as being invaluable aids to the training of fleet personnel. "There's no question in my mind," says one admiral, "that drone planes have saved . . . and will continue to save . . . countless American lives in combat. Because of their high speed and maneuverability, they train our men to become the best wing shots in the world."

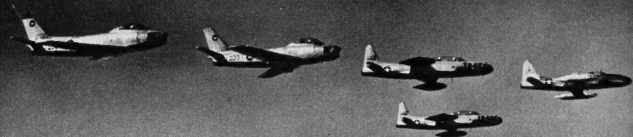
Today, the drones fly wherever the Navy flies, at home and abroad. An instructional school for their pilots is maintained at El Centro, California, and a target testing ground at Point Mugu, California.

In 1942, when the Armed Forces embarked on gunnery training programs, the Aircraft Division of Globe Corporation of Joliet, Illinois, converted from glider production to manufacture of drones.

Jet or propeller driven, the target drone is indeed fascinating. Made of light, alloy metals, its construction is similar to that of actual aircraft. Yet crammed inside the body, which is only two feet in diameter, is a monstrous amount of intricate equipment. There is the automatic pilot, as sensitive and accurate as any ever installed. The electronic controls make up another complex mass of wiring and gadgetry, for they must regulate not only all flight surfaces, but the all-important shut-off switch as well.

The purpose of this feature is economy. When the target is either hit, out of fuel, or ordered to stop flying, the shut-off switch kills the engine and simultaneously pops out a parachute, under which the drone floats gently to earth. In the case of a water landing, the wings have been filled with styrofoam material which floats the mechanism.

Learning to fly the target drones is a unique science, so delicate, in fact, that the Navy now holds rigid instruction courses in the El Centro school, in which pilots must "solo" for a minimum of 16 hours before fully qualifying. The Air Force's drone pilot school is at Eglin Field, Florida.



In this drone flight the QF-80 robot ship (leading) is controlled by back-seat pilots riding in the two DT-33s. F-86s riding tail position stand by for possible trouble.

Bottom half of Nike is booster rocket for launching. At 1,500 miles an hour, top half rides radar beam toward enemy plane. "Homing" device enables Nike to ram enemy.

In training operations, the rate of attrition of drones is almost as high as that incurred by the guns shooting them down. The reasons for this are many, and often humorous.

The desert training area provides, of necessity, a wide and clear horizon, for, though the targets are electronically controlled, the pilot must never let them leave his range of sight, usually two to three miles.

The plane is launched either by catapult, or dropped from a mother aircraft. At this moment, the ground pilot takes command. Seated on a camp chair, he holds a black control box on his knees. In the center is the traditional "stick," about four inches long. When the pilot moves this sharply in any direction, the electronic mechanism sends a "beep" or pulse to the ailerons and elevators of the drone. Unlike a normal aircraft, the device does not respond cumulatively to control pressure. To make a steep bank, the pilot must beep the stick several times.

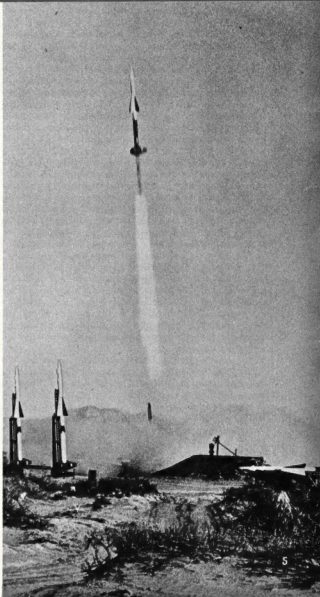
With practice, pilots can learn just the right amount of beeps needed for loops, snap rolls, Immelmans and all aircraft maneuvers. This, of course, is part of the fun.

Throttle settings on drones are always wide open, and so, with the tiny object moving away from its pilot at well over 200 miles an hour, flying often takes on ludicrous aspects. In many cases, for instance, El Centro pilots have momentarily lost their drone on the horizon and then shifted their control to a distant seagull. Several seconds later, the aircraft digs a trough in the desert, and the startled gull, heedless of electronics, flaps anxiously away.

In one such crash, a drone plowed into a clump of trees and promptly set them afire. As crews rushed to the scene, they found the blaze had flushed from hiding two Mexican wetbacks who ran into the arms of local authorities.

On one launching from a plane, the ground pilot insisted on playing aerial tag with the hovering mother. At this, an enraged pilot riding in the cockpit of the mother, switched his control box on again and resumed command of the drone. Seconds later, he popped the cut-off switch and guided the target down into the C.O.'s back yard.

For the present, while target drone aircraft continue to be used as inglorious clay pigeons of our armed services, others are being rapidly developed to take a place beside our front-line defense and offense weapons. At the same time hundreds of "ground pilots" are earning their wings and becoming an important part of Operation "Nullo." •



When CONAN DOYLE Played

On four notable occasions, the creator of Sherlock Holmes assumed the role of his master detective to solve murder cases muffed by Scotland Yard sleuths

BY ALAN HYND

Illustrated by Paul Kresse

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of the famous Sherlock Holmes stories, was himself a capable sleuth in real life. Playing the part of the infallible Holmes, Doyle solved two of England's most celebrated murder cases and, in addition, conducted investigations that saved one innocent man from the gallows and another from prison.

"Sir Arthur Conan Doyle," said Sir Basil Tomson, late head of Scotland Yard, "would have made an outstanding detective had he devoted himself to crime detection rather than to authorship. There was much of Sherlock Holmes in Doyle."

Doyle, like many writers, was a great reader of the newspapers—especially the sensation-packed British Sunday papers. One Sunday in 1913 he read a tragic story about a bride—a Mrs. Joseph Smith of Blackpool, Lancashire—who had suffered an attack of epilepsy and drowned in her bathtub. Sir Arthur found himself thinking about the tragedy several days after reading the story. Something, somehow, didn't seem quite right about it, but he couldn't put his finger on just what the trouble was.

A year later Sir Arthur read in a Sunday paper another item about a bride—a Mrs. John Lloyd—who had also drowned in her bathtub. She too, according to her husband, had suffered an attack of epilepsy.

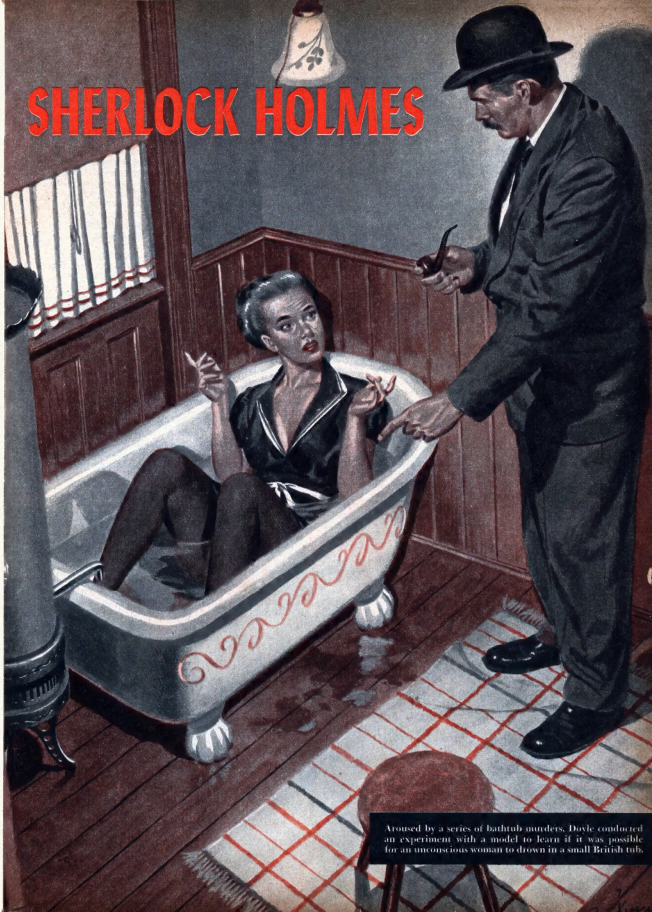
Sir Arthur was struck by the similarities of the two deaths. Both Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Lloyd had been brides. Both had suffered from epilepsy. Both had died while taking a bath.

And now Sir Arthur realized what had not seemed quite right about the death of Mrs. Smith and what, in fact, did not seem right about this second death. He could not accept a drowning in a bathtub. English bathtubs in those days were small affairs, barely big enough to hold an adult body in a semi-cramped position, and it occurred to Doyle that even though a person suffered an epileptic stroke it would be a virtual impossibility for the victim's head to sink below the water.

By way of satisfying himself on this point, Doyle decided to conduct an experiment—an experiment with a young lady in a bathtub. The young lady, attired in a bathing suit, stepped into a bathtub which Doyle had filled with water. He next had her simulate sudden unconsciousness and told her to let her head drop naturally.



SHERLOCK HOLMES



Aroused by a series of bathtub murders, Doyle conducted an experiment with a model to learn if it was possible for an unconscious woman to drown in a small British tub.

No matter how many times the young lady slumped, her head did not submerge in the water. It was only when Sir Arthur took the girl by the ankles and pulled her in such a way that her legs from the knees down were hanging over the side of the tub that she was able to get her head under water.

On the basis of his experiment Doyle was convinced that the deaths of the two brides did not result from epilepsy but from murder—murder perpetrated when the killer had held the victim's head under water. Doyle communicated his suspicions to a friend—Inspector Neil, of Scotland Yard.

Neil was at first inclined to discount Doyle's theory. For one thing, the Inspector was overworked. The first World War was about to break and the Yard was too busy with spies and saboteurs.

But Sir Arthur was persistent and finally convinced Inspector Neil that the deaths of Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Lloyd would bear looking into. "I believe," Doyle said to the Inspector, "that the same man drowned both women—probably for money."

The husband of the latest bride in the bath—the man who called himself Lloyd—had just collected a small inheritance that his wife had fallen heir to. Lloyd, according to Yard sleuths shadowing him, was a dreary-looking little man. So was Smith, the man whose bride had drowned in the bath at Blackpool the year before. Up to this point—since the Yard had linked the bathtub drownings of 1914 and 1915—there had been no publicity indicating that the Yard was suspicious of foul play. Doyle suggested that there might be one or more other deaths that would come to light if the Yard publicized the case. Meantime they should keep an eye on the man who called himself Smith and Lloyd.

Inspector Neil carefully considered Doyle's suggestion, then followed it. Doyle's hunch paid off. A few days later a newspaper reader recalled that the bride of a little man calling himself Williams had, while on her honeymoon, suffered an attack of epilepsy and drowned in her bath at Herne Bay. Her husband had collected her sizeable estate.

The next logical step was to arrest Smith-Lloyd-Williams whose real name turned out to be George Joseph Smith.

He was identified as the husband of all three brides in the bath. He had murdered all three for their money. And he might well have gone on with more bathtub murders—instead of being hanged at Maidstone Jail in August of 1915—had it not been for the Sherlock Holmes in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

One night, in 1903, when Conan Doyle was 44 years old, a reporter for the London *Times* called on him to talk about famous murder cases. There was one that stood out in his mind—that of a wealthy spinster named Camille Cecil Holland who had disappeared some three years past. Miss Holland, like many an old maid, had become infatuated with a fortune-hunting rascal, a Captain Samuel Herbert Dougal. Dougal, posing as a financial expert, had persuaded the woman to turn over most of her fortune to him for investment purposes. Soon afterwards, both of them disappeared.

Dougal was eventually found and jailed for forging Miss Holland's name to several financial papers after her disappearance. The police, although strongly suspecting that he had murdered the old maid, were unsuccessful in getting Dougal to admit much about her. The last time he had seen her, he maintained, she had talked of taking a long holiday.

"I read about that case," Doyle told the journalist. "They never did find any trace of the old girl, did they?"

"Not a trace," said the journalist.

"Where," asked Doyle, "were Miss Holland and this man Dougal last known to be seen together?"

"At a farm she owned in Saffron, Walden."

"What kind of a farm?"

"Oh, it was a large place, several hundred acres. They called it Moat Farm."

Doyle, bulky and tweedy, lapsed into silence, filled his pipe and lit it. "Moat Farm. A rather odd name for a farm. Did it actually have a moat on it?"

"At one time it did, but not at the time of Miss Holland's disappearance. It was filled in some time previously."

"Very long previously?"

"That I wouldn't know."

Doyle lapsed into silence again. "I presume," he said finally, "that the police went over the farm thoroughly on the theory that Miss Holland was murdered and that Dougal hid her body somewhere on the property."

Undaunted by wind and rain, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle often used a motor bike to conduct a countryside investigation.



"Oh, yes," replied the *Times* man, "it was gone over quite thoroughly."

"You were there when it was gone over?" The *Times* man had been there.

"Do you know if the police dug up the ground that was used to fill in the moat?"

The journalist's eyes widened. "Why, no. They never thought of doing that."

"Well," said Doyle, "I would suggest searching that ground in the moat since if the ground hadn't been there very long it would have been comparatively soft. Thus, if the killer got it into his head to bury the body he might have thought he could do so in relative safety since the soft ground from digging would arouse no particular suspicion."

So it was that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle solved another murder case. Just as he had deduced, Captain Samuel Herbert Douglas had murdered Camille Cecile Holland and hidden her body in the moat. The killer's plan had been so obvious that everybody had overlooked it.

It was in 1906 that Doyle became interested in the first of two cases in which he snatched innocent men from prison after they had been convicted through miscarriages of justice. Doyle, ever the avid newspaper reader, was pursuing an account of the strange case of a George Edalji, the son of the vicar of the village of Wyrley in Stratfordshire. Edalji, a brilliant young lawyer, had three years previously been imprisoned for the crime of illegally killing animals.

In the spring of the year in question a mysterious criminal had begun to appear in the fields around Wyrley in the dead of night to slaughter sheep, cattle and horses for no apparent reason, except for the insane pleasure of watching them bleed to death. As the crimes continued and the citizenry arose to a fever pitch of anger, the police worked around the clock, but without avail.

Then one day the village police received an anonymous letter. The criminal, the letter stated, was George Edalji, the son of the vicar who had a law office in Birmingham and who arrived home each night at about 7 o'clock. The village police, finding it difficult to believe that Edalji, a young man of spotless reputation, would have had anything to do with the savagery, tried to write off the anonymous letter as the work of a crank.

Then one night a prize pony was slain at the Great Wyrley Colliery. This latest crime so outraged the citizenry that the police had to do something. So they took the young barrister in for questioning.

And as is so often the case, the innocent man appeared to drip with guilt. He was evasive in his answers as to just where he had been and what he had been doing during the night in question. A hard rain had fallen between two and 3 o'clock in the morning—the very time, according to a veterinarian, that the pony had been slaughtered.

Examining the suspect's clothes, the police saw that they were damp. Edalji maintained that he had been caught in a rainstorm in Birmingham just before coming home the previous afternoon. The police were inclined to believe him until they noticed that he was wearing shoes with heels that were badly run down. The slaughterer, in leaving, had left his footprints in the rain-soaked earth. Judging by the depth and the distance between the prints, the man had been running. And he had had heels that were badly run down.

Edalji was held on suspicion. When the villagers became aware of the youth's arrest, two of them definitely identified him as the man they had seen running from the scene of the crime toward the vicarage during the rainstorm. That did it. Edalji was tried, convicted and sentenced to seven years in prison.

And so, three years later, as Conan Doyle sat reading the newspaper account of the crime and its solution, he decided that the case against the young barrister had been pretty thin. He began to wonder if Wyrley had not been the locale of an appalling miscarriage of justice.

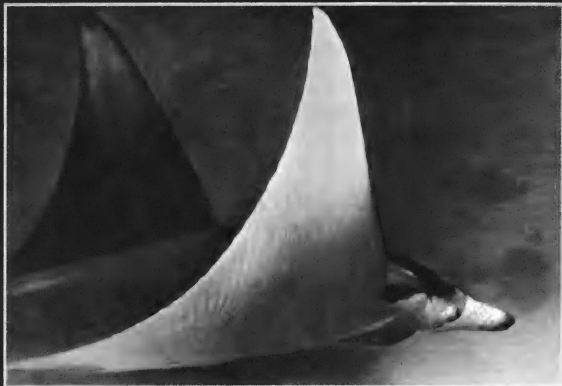
Doyle went to the prison and interviewed Edalji. He asked the prisoner for the details of his background—where he had spent his early days at school, who his teachers and classmates had been, and who his business associates had been.

As Doyle, who had begun life as a physician, sat there studying Edalji, he noticed that the man seemed to have difficulty seeing. "How long have you been troubled with your eyes?" Sir Arthur asked. Edalji had been troubled for years. The man was almost blind.

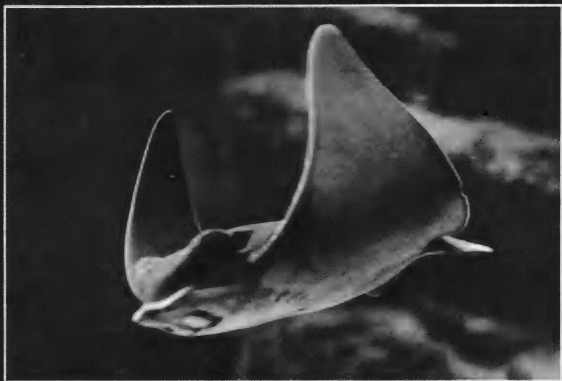
How, Sir Arthur wondered, could [Continued on page 40]


Items collected by Doyle are used to furnish a Sherlock Holmes room on Baker Street, dwelling of the fictional detective.





Often called the world's strongest creature, the manta grows as big as 30 feet in wing span and over five tons in weight. Looking like a giant bat who has strayed from his element, the manta presents a forbidding picture. Screenshot from India.





* Kill a manta you have to get under him and shoot into his air bellies. This takes plenty of guts because he can swim faster and crush you or lift you with a flipper.

WE SPEARED THE GIANT MANTA

The Arab fishermen whispered about the crushing death dealt out by the monstrous devilfish, but we wanted to fight one—and we got the battle of our lives

By Si Podolin

From the very start the giant Red Sea Manta had the best of it. He was big and deadly—and so were the waters where he waited for us. We knew only too well that the Red Sea is the worst place in the world for sharks. And although we outwardly scoffed at such rumors, we had some bad moments thinking about what the Arab fishermen of the Hedjaz coast had told us. According to them the favorite fighting trick of this monster was to throw himself on his prey from above, carry it down to the bottom and crush the life out of it.

Despite the natives' fear of the giant ray, Dr. Robert and I had no trouble hiring a motor-driven launch for our expedition. The owner of the boat was named Mohammed, but apparently so were all the other fishermen on the quay. To distinguish our man we christened him Ben Couscous, after couscous, the highly spiced national dish.

Ben Couscous turned out to be an excellent seaman, but not a very good mechanic and it took us an entire day to get out to the Isle of Abulat, one of the numerous manta feeding-grounds lying in the Far-San Bank.

An ancient reef risen from the sea, the island is nothing more than a great cemetery of fossils; the dead shellfish welded into the coral form 500,000-year-old cenotaphs. The

water about the island is clear blue-green, the saltiest and hottest in the world.

After we had explored Abulat, we still had sufficient light to scout the waters near our camp. We got into our rubber footpalmis, diving goggles and surface breathing tubes, then slipped into the remarkably-buoyant water.

The harpoon-guns we carried were the same toylike weapons we had used along the coast of southern France, consisting of nothing more than a four-foot hollow aluminum tube, with a three-and-a-half foot barbed steel arrow lying in a groove at the top of the barrel. The butt of the arrow slips into a pistol grip and is shot forward, when released by pressure on a trigger, by four powerful rubber straps. Though the gun is quite adequate for ordinary fish, we were in no way certain it could stop a giant manta.

We had hardly been in the water five minutes when we spotted our first devilfish. The creature was at least 24 feet from the tip of one flipper to the tip of the other. Soon its mate dove into sight. The second mammal must have been the male, for it was even heavier than the first one. Now

we saw others, lazily pumping their great flippers up and down, always swimming in pairs.

The beast Dr. Robert chose for his attack was the huge male. It had two hornlike antennae at the front of its head, which gave it the sinister appearance of some monstrous devil wrapped in a black cloak.

As a rule the doctor carefully planned his attacks, but the size of this beast amazed him so that he threw all caution aside. I saw his rubber flippers go into the air as he dove. Then he headed straight for the beast. He came so close to him that from above it looked as though he had landed on the monster's back.

I heard the vibrations of his gun, heard the impact of the steel arrow as it drove into flesh. The instant the harpoon plunged into the manta, the creature went berserk. With the arrow sticking from his back, he cut for the bottom, towing Robert astern.

The fight ended quickly. The air in Robert's lungs gave out and he was forced to let go his gun and swim topside.

Just as he surfaced, we were startled by a wild scream on the beach. "Shark! Shark!" Ben Couscous was standing on a high block of coral, screaming the warnings.

We didn't stop to look around—we just cut loose for the shore, our footpalm kicking up a wake of froth behind us.

Once up on the rocks we lay back breathing hard, unable to speak. The doctor was the first to regain his voice.

"That," he growled disgustedly, "is the most stupid thing we could do, losing our heads when there are sharks about."

"I didn't see you staying behind to talk with the beast," I remarked.

"We should know better," continued the doctor, "the shark won't attack an undersea hunter. He goes only for bathers and swimmers."

"That isn't what Han Hauss says," I argued. "He won't hunt in the Red Sea anymore. Every time he harpooned a fish he had a dozen sharks around him."

"The shark will go after a wounded fish," the doctor shot back. "But if he sees the entire body of a man in the water, I tell you he will not attack. He's half blind, with a pilot fish leading him about, isn't he? He sees only the feet and arms of a swimmer. What do they look like to him? The tentacles of an octopus. And you know how they love octopi."

"My eye," I muttered. "In the last twenty-four years thirty-eight people have been attacked by sharks. Of these thirty-eight only nine survived. All the others died either because of loss of blood, or because of infection."

"They were all swimmers," insisted the doctor. "The splashing of a hunter's flippers, the sight of the diving goggles frightens the beast. He's not used to noise below the surface."

All the way back to the tent, Dr. Robert continued to expound his theories on the shark. He had made an exhaustive study of the monster and I knew he was mulling over the possibilities of going after a shark with his harpoon-gun.

This foolhardiness in Robert's character sprang from his wartime experiences. As a leader in the French maquis, he had been captured by the Gestapo and lined up with six other patriots to be shot. One by one five of the men had been executed. When they came to Robert, he broke and ran for it. Before he got very far, he was shot three times in the back.

They left him lying in a ditch for dead. This experience apparently led him to believe he had a charmed life. However, I had no such ideas about my own hide.

When the Arab awakened us the next morning, the sun was sticking above the eastern horizon. Before we had finished our coffee, the full heat of the tropical day was all around us.

Carrying our gear down to the beach, we got into the youyou and set out for the north end of the island.

"You still want to try to use the harpoon-gun from the boat?" asked the doctor.

"What do we have to lose?"

"That'll mean practically driving the boat up on the back of one of the beasts," continued Robert. He was now lying over the bow of the youyou, his charged harpoon-gun held in his right hand. "I tell you," he persisted, "you need a heavy whale harpoon for a job like this. These guns were designed to shoot under water."

Turning about in the youyou, I began to row facing the bow, so that I might better watch the doctor. Astern I saw two great black shadows in the sea and I sang out to Robert. But he motioned me to keep rowing.

Dr. Robert picks up a few fish for his 40 ft. youyou. The harpoon-gun, the men say, I worked on smaller fish, but a 200 lb. manta—something like this.



This huge manta, captured off the Chinese coast, weighed a ton and a half and had 350 pounds of fish in his mouth.

Then I spotted a great black spot in the blue-green water. A manta!

Dr. Robert pulled himself further over the bow. Suddenly I heard the slap of the rubber straps of his gun. There was a moment's silence. Then the harpoon line snapped taut and the little youyou lurched sharply as it took off behind the harpooned manta.

Abruptly the devilfish sounded, almost putting the little boat down by the head. Then the beast rose to the surface and cleared the water in a splendid leap. He went over 20 feet into the air, then came back into the water with a thunderous whack. Now he made a sharp turn to port and headed for a coral reef. The pointed jagged "negro-heads" lay dead ahead, sticking just above the surface.

"Cut him adrift!" I yelled at the top of my lungs.

But the doctor refused—he didn't want to lose the beast. All the while we were closing the rocks at more than nine knots.

"Cut him adrift!" I roared again.

Dr. Robert pulled out his sheath-knife and severed the harpoon line. The youyou still had a little way on her and for several minutes the doctor and I could see the manta heading for the depths in sharp spurts of speed, its great black flippers working up and down like the wings of a giant bat.

"Voilà!" said the doctor disgustedly, "all we did was leave the poor wounded creature to be torn to pieces by sharks."

"Better than getting ourselves torn to pieces, isn't it?"

"The manta," went on the doctor, "is too heavy for a youyou."

"Ben Couscous," I argued, "is not bringing his fishing boat in among these reefs, and I don't blame him."

"He has a heavy grapnel anchor in the boat, hasn't he?" said the doctor. "We'll make the harpoon lines fast to that; then when we make a strike we can let Ben Couscous heave the anchor over. Let the manta run with that, if he can."

"But we'll have to go into the water."

"You've got the shark-horrors."

Back on Abulat we went to work on Ben Couscous, trying to convince him that he would not be crushed to death by a manta or eaten by sharks if he rode the youyou.

"All you have to do," explained the doctor, "is have the anchor over the side when you see we have a strike."

"I saw how the manta went into the air out there," argued the Arab. "Break every bone in my body if he came down on me."

"Why should he come down on you?"

"Why shouldn't he?"

Finally, with the help of more silver piastres, we persuaded the Arab to lend us a hand. Then while Dr. Robert and I lay down to rest in the shade of the tent, Ben Couscous prepared our lunch.

After lunch, we took Ben Couscous' anchor and placed it in the youyou in such a manner that it would be easy to get it over the side. Tying our harpoon lines to the grapnel ring, we rowed back to the manta feeding-ground and got into our diving gear.

Before following the doctor into the water, I said to Ben Couscous, "Keep a sharp [Continued on page 38]"



Balance tests like this one will never tell if the driver was really "drunk." There are several reliable, scientific tests.

Are you a **DRINKING DRIVER** or a **DRUNKEN DRIVER?**

How many drinks can you have and still drive safely? Fool-proof machines in 44 states can tell you—and there's no arguing with them

by Emile C. Schurmacher

Bill Hendricks and his wife were driving through a small mid-western town, en route from Chicago to New York City on a business trip one evening, when the front bumper of their convertible hit the left rear mudguard of the coupe ahead as it turned into a driveway.

Bill is a careful driver. The accident wasn't serious and it wasn't his fault. It might have been one of the thousands of common traffic mishaps which are ordinarily settled by a report to the insurance company.

But as Bill was showing his operator's license and registration certificate to the highstrung woman at the wheel of the other car she smelled his breath, noticed his bloodshot eyes and called a cop. Before he quite realized what it was

all about he was taken to the local police station, suspected of driving while under the influence of alcohol.

What happened to him then can happen to you. It has happened to many law abiding, capable drivers who take an occasional drink.

"The cop who arrested me and the police chief refused to believe that I had only one rye highball," Bill later told me. "They were skeptical when I explained that my eyes were irritated because I'd been driving with the top down.

"They even told me that I wasn't talking as if I was sober. Maybe I did stammer some I was so damn indignant. Besides, I was pretty nervous because I'd never been arrested before."

The chief told Bill to walk a straight chalk line. He did. Then he was told to close his eyes and touch the tip of his nose with the forefinger of his left hand. He did, but a little slowly because his reflexes were affected by his nervousness.

This didn't satisfy the cops. They gave Bill a Rombert test. He was ordered to stand erect with his eyes closed, with legs and feet together, and his arms outstretched.

Bill obeyed and he began to sway. The chief nodded significantly. The swaying was supposed to show that Bill had been drinking so much liquor that he couldn't keep his balance. But many a teetotaler will also react the same way.

Bill was booked for driving while under the influence of alcohol. His wife hurried frantically to a telegraph office, wired home for money and posted a bond. You can't settle for an immediate trial before a justice of the peace and a fine on a serious charge like this. You've got to come back to court days, maybe weeks later. And the cost of such a trial varies from \$175 to \$1,250.

At the trial, Bill's lawyer knocked the cops' "evidence" into the nearest ashcan. He was a good lawyer and he charged Bill \$275 which included the fee and travel expense from the State capital. If he hadn't been a good lawyer, Bill might have been fined from \$50 to \$100, sent to jail for five days, lost his preferred risk rating with his insurance company.

Besides getting harmful press publicity as a result, he also would have faced his driving future with the disturbing knowledge that if ever again he was luckless enough to be the victim of a similar situation the charge against him as a second offender would be a felony.

With traffic fatalities continuing to increase at an alarming rate throughout the country more and more much needed attention is being focused on the menace of the "drunken" driver. The fact that a motorist may become irresponsible when he steps on the accelerator after drinking too much is beyond argument. Studies made by the Committee on Tests for Intoxication of the National Safety Council show that a driver's chance of being involved in an accident is 55 times greater when he is under the influence of alcohol.

But with law enforcement agencies cracking down, with judges imposing heavier fines and stiffer jail sentences, what safeguards have the millions of occasional and moderate drinkers against being falsely and erroneously branded "dangerous" after one or two drinks? How, if caught in an unfortunate situation like that of Bill Hendricks, can you protect yourself without considerable loss of time and money? How much liquor can you drink safely, from a legal standpoint to defend yourself, and medically, to retain full possession of your faculties?

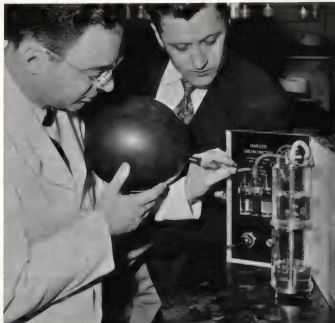
After CAVALIER assigned me to learn the answers to these questions I interviewed a number of physicians, scientists, lawyers, judges and law enforcement authorities. "At what stage of drinking," I asked, "does a person become 'drunk'?"

Their answers were vague. The word "drunk" appears in few, if any motor vehicle codes, laws or legal documents in the United States. What is written is "under the influence of alcohol."

"Is this legal hair-splitting and quibbling over words?" I asked Dr. Leon A. Greenberg, Associate Director of the Laboratory of Applied Physiology, at the Yale Center of Alcohol Studies. Dr. Greenberg is the inventor of the Alcometer, an apparatus which scientifically measures the amount of alcohol in the bloodstream and is an international authority on the subject.



Officials of the New York Police Department watch testing of the Alcometer, a breath-sampling machine that accurately measures percentage of alcohol in blood stream.



Harger Drunkometer analyzes breath after suspect inflates balloon. Diabetics and others sometimes appearing to be drunk are protected by the fool-proof instruments.

Cooperative driver blows up balloon of the Intoximeter. After breath sample is taken, officer waits prescribed length of time. If chemicals change color, you're a risk.



"Drunkness or intoxication describes a gross form of behavior," he explained to me. "Your interpretation of it, and mine, and that of a cop may vary greatly."

"We all conform to certain standards of behavior. A person who deviates considerably from these standards by swaying or weaving, by becoming hilarious, by thickness of speech or seeming befuddlement or by 'passing out' is often thought to be 'drunk'."

Because most of us associate these attitudes only with drunks, many tragic errors have been made and continue to be made. Any physician or nurse can tell you that there are more than 100 conditions ranging from diabetic shock, epilepsy and barbiturate poisoning to a fracture of the skull which can give a victim an appearance of being intoxicated.

Due to our casual readiness to judge from appearances many "drunks" have been put in jail overnight to sober up when they should have been immediately hospitalized instead. Along many skid rows "drunks" have fallen and been left by indifferent or good-natured cops to "sleep it off" when an ambulance should have been sent for. How many have died as a result of this ignorance or neglect no one knows.

Some 14 years ago, two states, Indiana and Maine began searching for a formula which would define intoxication.

Concerned chiefly with motorists who had been drinking, they divided drivers into three classes as follows: First, those whose blood contained less than .05 per cent (.07 per cent in Maine) of alcohol. In terms of drinking, this means a person who has taken not more than two ounces of whisky or two bottles of beer. In this range a motorist involved in an accident would not be prosecuted for being under the influence of alcohol.

Second, drivers whose blood contained between .05 and .15 per cent of alcohol. This means a person who has taken not more than 6 to 7 ounces of whisky, or 6 to 7 bottles of

beer. In this zone some people would be definitely under the influence of alcohol. The evidence might be used when other symptoms warranted prosecution.

Third, drivers having more than .15 per cent alcohol in their blood. It was decided that every person in this range is influenced and that such a concentration would be considered as *prima facie* evidence that a defendant was under the influence sufficiently to make him a risk.

When you are under the influence of alcohol your faculties are impaired by what you have been drinking. If you are a "controlled" drinker, the kind of lad who has a reputation of being able to "hold his liquor" you may be higher than a kite yet show few signs of it.







Not long ago Dr. Greenberg proved this when he rounded up several bums, all habitual and heavy drinkers, brought them to the Applied Physiology lab and paid them \$4 a day to sit around and drink all they wanted.

They drank slowly, methodically and steadily. They sat on plain wood benches, answered Dr. Greenberg's questions and showed no outward indications of drinking too much until they quietly passed out.

Then Dr. Greenberg repeated the experiment with a group of "amateur" drinkers who were given only two cocktails. Provided with a partylike atmosphere, hors-d'oeuvres and the like, several of them became hilarious after the first drink. A few even showed outward symptoms of intoxication before having a drink due to psychological anticipation.

Thousands of drinking tests and experiments have been made and a wealth of impressive data has been accumulated. As a driver, however, there are just three important facts you should remember:

First, when you drink too much you slow up your reaction time. Normally it takes you one-fifth of a second from the time you see a hazard until you do something about it. Depending on how much you've been drinking, your reaction time slows down to three or to four-fifths of a second and more. In other words it will take you up to four

Straight Shot	Beer	Highball	Martini	"Sobered" Wine	Table Wine
					
100 Proof	3.2 per cent	100 Proof	100 Proof Gin 46 Proof Verm	11 per cent	11 per cent
Container holds this amount of liquid in ounces.					
1	12	12	2 1/4	4	4
Drink contains this amount of pure alcohol in ounces.					
1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	3/4	3/4
Maximum number of drinks you can have and still be "sober."					
6	6	6	4	4	8

TIME: To play it perfectly safe, if you've had 2 drinks, you should wait 1 hour before driving; 4 drinks, wait 2 hours; 6 drinks, wait 3 hours; 8 drinks, wait 4 hours. That one for the road may be fatal.

DRUNKENNESS—In 16 states, over .15 per cent alcohol in your blood is enough to convict you of drunken driving. If tests show between .05 and .15 per cent, AND if you can't walk a chalk line, you'll be convicted. With less than .05 per cent alcohol in your blood, you'll be safe.

THE CHART—You may not agree that with 6 straight shots or 4 martinis under your belt, you are still "sober." The point is, with this much alcohol in your system you won't go over the .15 per cent danger line. On the other hand, you probably couldn't walk the line, so you COULD be convicted. The best rule: if you're driving, never exceed the "maximum number," AND stop with the drink that makes you "tipsy."

TOLERANCE—How a drink "hits" you is your own personal problem. A big man can take more than a small man. Why? Because the big man has more blood to absorb the same amount of alcohol. Hence, the concentration of alcohol in his blood will be lower. If a 150-pound man takes 2 drinks on an empty stomach, 45 minutes later he'll have .05 per cent alcohol in his blood, just enough to make him a "borderline" case.

FOOD—While that cocktail before dinner may knock you for a loop, after dinner it wouldn't. Food in the stomach slows down the rate of absorption. Diluted drinks, gin and sparkling wines are absorbed more rapidly than straight shots and beer, so they "hit" quicker and harder.



Feet together, eyes closed, arms outstretched, then touch the tip of your nose with finger. This and other such tests, according to experts, are scientifically unsound.

or more times longer to respond in case of an emergency.

Second, the more you drink the more you decrease the range of your peripheral driving vision. This "range" is that part of what you see on either side of you—cars about to pass you, obstructions, pedestrians on the shoulder of the road, and so on. When you drink too much your peripheral vision diminishes to tunnel-like vision in which you see the road ahead as if looking at it through a tunnel.

Third, as you drink, your judgment suffers. You may still know exactly what to do in an emergency but you lose your ability to do it as well and as quickly as you'd like to do it. What adds to the danger is that you may become overconfident as your judgment loses its sharpness.

The question of how much you can safely drink before driving is difficult to answer. You, yourself must know how alcohol affects you both as to quantity and type of liquor. For a general rule-of-thumb, however, Dr. E. M. Jellinek, noted authority on alcohol research has this to say:

"In connection with quantity you must also consider time. If you take two ounces of whisky, I'd say wait about one hour before you drive. If you take four ounces wait two hours and for each additional ounce add one hour. You can see that after eight ounces you'd have to wait six hours, and so you'd better let somebody else drive.

"If you are scared of whisky, it might even be unsafe for you to drive after just wetting your lips with it. In that case not the alcohol but the fear of consequences interferes with your driving."

No matter what alcoholic beverage you drink you can work out your own safe drinking guide by using this time schedule for whisky or other 100 proof liquor as a norm.

If you're a beer drinker figure that a bottle of 3.2 per cent beer contains about one-half ounce of alcohol. When you drink two bottles you're on par with the chap who has had two ounces of whisky.

If you're a wine drinker, remember that alcoholic content varies. In general, light wines, naturally fermented from fruit juices contain from 10 to 14 per cent alcohol.

"Boosted" wines, sherry, muscatel or port to which distilled alcohol has been added, contain from 18 to 20 per cent alcohol.

Some imported wines are more potent and so are many exotic liquors and cordials. If you're going to drive, it's a smart idea to stick to the type liquor you're familiar with. Save your experimenting for some other time.

Most of us have acquired a few drinking rules we accept without question. Some of the most popular don't tell the whole story. They can be pitfalls.

You may believe that you can drink more and stay sober longer by drinking highballs instead of straight shots. This is true only if you take your time and stretch out your high-ball drinking.

"Up to a certain point diluted whiskies are absorbed more rapidly than concentrated alcohol," Dr. Greenberg explains. "Then too, cereal ingredients in brewed beverages greatly slow the rate of absorption so that for equal amounts of alcohol, as diluted whisky on the one hand and beer on the other, that from the whisky will be absorbed much more rapidly than that from the beer, with a correspondingly higher concentration in the blood."

Many of us think of a drink, particularly a cocktail, before dinner as packing a terrific wallop. While it may, the effect is only temporary.

Dr. Howard W. Haggard, physician and noted researcher in the Yale lab explains the before-dinner cocktail this way:

"The effects from alcohol are exercised on the brain and vary in intensity with the concentration. Consequently if a strong alcoholic beverage is taken on an empty stomach the sudden rise in the concentration in the blood, due to slow general distribution, may result in what is called 'over-shooting' of the concentration.

"The effects of a small amount are experienced as disproportionately great, but only for a very short time, since, with slowing of absorption, the [Continued on page 41]



Nervousness and fatigue frequently cause suspect drivers to fail balance tests. Not always valid exams, several police agencies continue to use them for court evidence.

Here, a walk-the-line test is performed by a driver thought to be tipsy. Medical scientists say that such crude evidence should not determine a driver's guilt.





the THIEF-TAKER

Brandon was wrong. The strange manhunter lurking behind him in the steaming jungle wasn't after his head—just part of it

by Gordon Schendel

Illustrated by Ray Johnson

As the dull diamonds rattled onto the dirt, Brandon said, "And now you're a rich man. So let me go." The thief-taker chuckled. "You realize, of course, that I will shoot you now."

The Mato Grosso sun had sunk to the palm-notched horizon, but the jungle still steamed. Brandon's head was splitting and pounding. He'd been walking since dawn—with no time out for food or the siesta which was a necessity in the furnace-heat of mid-day. Now he was on the verge of collapse.

But he hadn't dared waste a minute of daylight. Pursuit couldn't be many hours behind.

And just two nights before he'd been on top of the world. He'd ridden into the tiny riverbank settlement at sunset. After a meal in the local bar, he'd lingered to drink *cachaca*, the colorless sugar-cane rum. A handful of *mestizos*, natives of mixed Portuguese, Negro and Indian blood had been idling there too.

One, a young vaqueiro, had started it all by asking what business brought Brandon through these parts. In that rough company, Brandon hadn't cared to admit he was a diamond buyer. But he'd smiled at the thought of the big, uncut alluvial stones which he'd gotten in trade for food and ammunition from the prospectors on the Rio das Mortes for the ridiculous price of \$5 a carat. He could sell them on the coast at easily 2,000 per cent profit. His smile had turned into a sneer as he'd recalled those damned-fool prospectors who sweated their lives out, and frequently lost them, working in the alligator and piranha-infested river merely on the chance of dredging up enough diamonds to stake themselves to a few more months of such killing work.

Despite Brandon's hostile silence, the cowpuncher had brought his drink over and straddled a chair beside him, to continue his tactless but good-natured questions. Brandon heartily despised all natives, and the vaqueiro's uninvited overtures made him burn inside. He'd smoldered silently a minute, then had begun baiting the vaqueiro, cleverly leading him on to make him appear an ignorant lout again and again before his friends. Then, tiring of this sport, he'd emphasized his contempt by suddenly hurling his drink in the vaqueiro's face. The dumbfounded youngster had floundered about, temporarily blinded—and Brandon, on the pretext that the vaqueiro might be about to reach for his gun, had deliberately shot him down.

Then he had casually walked out, before his victim's *cachaca*-mellowed pals had recovered from their surprise. His only regret had been that he'd cheated himself out of a bed for the night.

He'd ridden out of town with no interference. Perhaps he'd been foolish to take along his slow burro. But he hadn't wanted to leave his equipment behind, and he'd been rea-



sonably sure that no pursuit would be organized before morning.

He'd ridden hard downriver through grassy, dried-up marshland, and had pushed his animals all the next day, away from the river until at nightfall he'd struck the jungle.

He hadn't dared chance a fire, for he'd put too little distance between himself and the settlement. So he'd been determined to sit up all night, especially since almost at once he'd heard the far-off, rumbling roar of a jaguar on the prowl. After eating, he'd propped himself against an acuri palm, wrapped in his poncho to keep off some of the mosquitoes, with his Winchester across his knees. He'd heard the big cat roar again over the screaming of some night birds, but still he'd fallen asleep almost immediately.

Hours later, he'd been awakened by the frenzied braying of the burro, the panicky neighing of his horse and a tremendous stamping and thrashing in the underbrush.

He'd been sure it was the jaguar. But his flashlight had picked out, instead, a huge boa constrictor, tightening its tree-thick coils in a death grip around the luckless burro.

He'd run forward and fired twice. The giant coils had slackened their bone-crushing grip and begun flailing around, breaking branches right and left—and he'd flung himself hurriedly back.

Just then, his horse—which had been rearing in terror—had broken its tether and plunged off into the underbrush. Cursing wildly, Brandon had raced after, plowing frantically through bushes and vines and tearing his face and arms on thorns. But it had been a hopeless chase, and after a few minutes he'd made his way slowly back to his campsite. The python had been still writhing, sluggishly. Though it hadn't been necessary, he'd angrily shot it again.

"God damn you," he'd said, dully. "you damned slimy son of Satan."

Fortunately, he'd still had his rifle, his revolver, his compass and knife and matches in his pockets—and the diamonds. But the bulk of his equipment had been battered almost out of recognition by the thrashing python. He'd salvaged only some cartridges and his frying pan and some half-flattened cans of food, which he'd bundled in his poncho.

He'd hoped that now it was daylight his horse might return. But with the sun rising rapidly, he'd delayed as long as he dared. He'd continued all day under the merciless sun, staggering and stumbling as the hours dragged by and falling often as the sun descended.

And now it was night again, night with its stinging insects and maniacal bird cries, its prowling jaguars and pumas all seeking their prey—and its men, equally ruthless, seeking their human prey. Despite the danger that human eyes might see it, after the nightmare of last night he didn't dare sleep without a fire.

He walked off the trail and dropped his pack. Aching in every muscle, he set about gathering firewood, intermittently using his flashlight. But he felt an increasing dread of brazenly advertising his presence by lighting his fire. Before striking a match, he painfully hoisted himself up into a piava tree and climbed until he could see back over the shorter palms.

Then he almost fell to the ground. For, as he watched, a small campfire sprang up—scarcely a half-mile away.

The thief-taker!

What chance had he now, with his pursuer only minutes behind? The thief-taker would get him, first thing in the morning. But thank God he hadn't lit his fire, or the thief-taker would have had him tonight!

Brandon had learned about thief-takers on his first trek into the Mato Grosso. Through unofficial, a thief-taker was the nearest thing to a law officer in the jungle. He was a cold-blooded professional gunman who made his living hiring out to the victim of a robbery, or to the relatives of a murder victim. A thief-taker seldom took his man alive.

Usually he brought back just enough evidence to prove his mission had been successful.

Brandon stared at the little fire, desperately trying to figure out how to save himself.

He'd wait an hour to be sure the thief-taker was asleep, then creep up on him and send a bullet into his head. And, just that simply, he'd have a horse again!

But a second thought shook his confidence. A man who spent his life in the jungle certainly would be a light sleeper and since he himself was inexperienced at creeping around in the brush, he'd be sure to trumpet his approach to those animal-keen ears. That would be fatal.

And then he realized what he had to do.

He slid down out of the tree and made his way back to his campsite. Working rapidly, he wrapped his poncho around a big armload of firewood, shaping it into the form of a sleeping man. Then he struck a match to the kindling. As the flame started up, he raced behind a choked tangle of wall-like growth and dropped to the ground.

Before long, he heard a faint stirring of foliage, then more rustling, then the unmistakable snap of a twig, close at hand. Whoever was approaching was doing so almost as clumsily as he himself would have.

Then a rifle cracked and the poncho roll jarred slightly as a bullet slugged into the hidden wood. Brandon automatically aimed his Winchester at the flash, but didn't fire. He'd have a better target soon.

Suddenly, a man with his rifle cradled on his arm leaped into the firelight and ran, grinning, a few steps forward. Brandon squeezed the trigger. The man fell with his head almost in the fire.

Brandon saw a second man, gaping like a fish, standing in the underbrush. Instead of dodging back in the undergrowth, the man stepped full into the firelight and dropped his gun. "Don't shoot! I surrender!" He raised his shaking arms high. Brandon barked the one vital question. "How many more of you are there?"

"Don't shoot, there's no one but me. You are safe. Only let me go, and I will swear we could not find you. If I do not return, there will be others who will come after."

Brandon sent a bullet into his mouth.

Brandon was sure the man had been too scared to lie, but he stayed hidden a good half-hour. Finally, he climbed stiffly to his feet and rolled over the nearer corpse. He caught his breath. It was the vaqueiro he'd killed back in the settlement! Had he only wounded him then? He feverishly tore open the bloody shirt.

But, of course, there was only one bullet hole. So this man had been that vaqueiro's brother. Brandon lit a cigarette and walked over to the other corpse. The gory face, he saw now, decidedly resembled the other—another brother, or a cousin.

He laughed, shortly. Instead of the deadly thief-taker, it had been only a couple of hot-headed, clumsy amateurs, hell-bent on personally avenging a relative.

He had some trouble locating the mestizos' campsite until a horse nickered restively. He kept his rifle at the ready until he almost fell over the horses and saw there were indeed only two.

Horses! Wonderful horses! He threw his arms around the neck of the nearer, and, though it shied, he buried his face in its mane, laughing wildly until he didn't know whether he was laughing or crying.

The second horse, frightened, reared, plunged, snapped its tether and bolted back up the trail.

A week later he was still traveling—and he had seen no more signs of pursuit. Another week and he'd reach civilization, or at least its outposts. With the passing of each day, he grew more confident of success.

But each night he worried that perhaps the damned second horse hadn't fed a jaguar after all, that it had returned to the settlement and set off the alarm. Each night he remembered the dead faces [Continued on page 39]



CONFERENCE

MONROE to THOMAS:

"Why don't you finish what you were saying?"



Allen Dulles, with his perpetual tweed suit and pipe, looks more like a prep school headmaster than our cloak and dagger chief.

Robert Amory, Jr., is Director of Intelligence Division for the CIA.



Lt. Gen. Harold R. Bull is head of CIA's National Estimates Division.



Former Air Force Lt. Gen. Charles Cabell is CIA's Deputy Director.





Allen Dulles - America's Master Spy

We've learned, we no longer regard spying "dirty business."

Today, our CIA is beating the Russians at their own game

by Martin L. Gross

It was March 5th, 1955. In Washington, D. C., top government officials had just received the startling news. Joseph V. Stalin was dead. The White House and the Pentagon were paralyzed. Excited officials asked each other: What does it mean? Would it set off a new Russian revolution? Or would pudgy Malenkov's bombers soon be leveling New York and Detroit?

All eyes turned to Allen Dulles, head of our super-secret Central Intelligence Agency—the man responsible for knowing what is going on behind the Iron Curtain. No one could act without his intelligence report.

It wasn't long in coming. Soon after the first newspaper extras hit the stands, one of our agents left Allen Dulles' private office at CIA headquarters. He clutched a sealed envelope under his arm. A few minutes later he strode past White House guards and was hurriedly ushered into the inner confines of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. He placed the envelope on President Eisenhower's desk.

It was the CIA's top-secret "crash report" on Stalin's death. Included in the portfolio were last minute espionage reports from our undercover agents in Moscow, Prague, Warsaw and East Berlin. Copies of stolen Russian documents, notes on Red Army troop movements, political reports from men close to the Kremlin. It was everything the President had to know.

The vital report was the result of the fantastic CIA coordination. Seconds after the news of Stalin's death flashed on the teletype at CIA headquarters at 2430 E. Street, Allen Dulles sprang into action. Word was sent to hundreds of regular CIA agents and anti-communist spies on our payroll throughout the world. Dulles' orders were blunt and simple: bring in every scrap of information on the strength of the new Communist regime and its war plans.

His orders were immediately transformed into action. In West Berlin, a newly-arrived East German, "businessman" cast a nervous glance over his shoulder. He stepped into a phone booth and dialed the number of his American CIA contact—another supposed businessman.

"The machinery is still in the same warehouse," the German said into the phone. The CIA agent understood. It meant that the Russian tank division in the East Berlin suburbs had not been moved since Stalin's death.

In Prague, an important Communist official out for an evening's stroll brushed past one of Dulles' agents. Their hands met for a split second. Safely stowed away in our CIA man's pocket was the latest Kremlin directive to satellite

leaders. These scenes were repeated across the length and breadth of the Iron Curtain.

In Washington, the lights of the CIA's 34 buildings burned late into the night. Incoming cables from overseas offices were quickly decoded. They told the full story of Soviet armament shipments, purges, morale behind the Iron Curtain, the state of Russian fifth columns, and Red Army troop movements. Usually jovial CIA chief Allen Dulles grimly called a hurried conference with his top aides, including Lieutenant General Harold R. Bull and Professor Sherman Kent of Yale. The last-minute reports from the field were evaluated. They were then compared with background material on Malenkov and the new Soviet leaders.

The result, the CIA emergency "crash report," was finally in the President's hands for action. Allen Dulles—backed up by a fabulous staff and 15 hard-won years of intelligence experience—had assured President Eisenhower that Russia was not ripe for either revolution or an atomic war. Washington breathed easier.

The cloak and dagger CIA is something new in American life. For a long time, "spy" was considered a dirty word in our vocabulary. In fact, back in the 30's, Secretary of State Henry Stimson cut out the super-secret "Black Chamber" division because "gentlemen don't read each other's mail." But the heroic adventures of our undercover OSS agents during World War II taught Washington a lesson.

Today, somewhere between 3,000 and 10,000 American CIA agents, spread out from Germany to Singapore, cajole, buy, and steal information of all kinds for Uncle Sam.

The CIA is a secret agency. It is so secret that less than a dozen men know its budget or how many employees it has. Estimates of its budget (a good clue to CIA strength) vary from \$10,000,000 to \$500,000,000. But only a few carefully chosen Congressmen know the exact figures. CIA funds are cleverly hidden away in the budgets of other government agencies.

Dulles' agents are spotted in some 30 foreign nations, where they pose as "insurance salesmen" or "importers." They operate under dozens of different covers and their true identity is kept secret, even from trusted American officials in the same country.

CIA men never carry important documents. These are sent to Washington by a special top-secret courier service.



Communists claim CIA conspired with Laszlo Rajk (left), Hungary's Foreign Minister, and Rudolf Slansky (right),

Party head in Czechoslovakia. Both men were executed for treason. Center, trial scene of Rajk and accomplices.

When a CIA agent is hurt in an accident out of town, Allen Dulles quickly whisks him out of local hands. Those who crack under the strain of espionage work are cared for by the CIA's own doctor-agents. In a coma, or under the influence of drugs these men might reveal secret information.

CIA office trash—from Dulles' office down to the lowliest clerks—is shredded and burned daily. The charwomen who clean up are thoroughly screened. Even typewriter ribbons used on secret documents are taken out of the machines and locked up for the night.

Employees of the CIA go through Washington's most severe security check. Out of every 1,000 job applicants, 800 are quickly weeded out. Of the remaining 200, only 90 lucky ones come through after being screened to see if they talk too much, can't carry their liquor, or have relatives behind the Iron Curtain.

Secrecy has been the motto of the CIA ever since it was first organized by President Truman in September, 1947. A CIA official once said: "An intelligence officer who talks about his work ceases to be an intelligence officer." Officially, all the Agency will say about its work is: "The main function of the CIA is to coordinate intelligence activities. . . . CIA's security responsibilities are limited to the area outside the United States and no one connected with the CIA will discuss them in any manner. . . . Employees of the CIA will never tell what their duties are, how they work, with whom they work. They will say they are employed by the CIA, period."

The man who runs this close-mouthed secret agency for America is lanky Allen Welsh Dulles, Washington's official master spy. Not too long ago, Dulles was engineering minor revolutions, outwitting the highly-praised *Gestapo*, and stealing Nazi secrets from under Hitler's nose.

To find out what makes a 20th century master spy click, CAVALLER arranged an interview for me with Mr. Dulles. I met him at CIA Headquarters in Washington, D. C.

The nerve center of the CIA is housed in a cluster of about 10 old buildings on a small hill on the outskirts of Washington. During World War II, it served as OSS headquarters. The entrance to the property is plainly marked "Central Intelligence Agency." The driveway bears uphill then bends right and left up to the Administration Building where Dulles works. I got no further than the lobby. A uniformed guard stopped me. Then a ruddy faced military-looking man suddenly appeared from a little ante room off the lobby and introduced himself. "I'm Colonel Stanley Grogan," he said, "one of Mr. Dulles' assistants."

I was given a preliminary briefing by the Colonel. He warned me not to ask certain questions, and told me to avoid certain topics because of security.

About an hour later, Mr. Dulles arrived back at CIA Headquarters after a mid-day plane trip to New England. I interviewed him in his inner office where he was seated

behind a large desk flanked by flags of the United States and the CIA. He rose to say hello, and for a man who is known to operate on a split second schedule, he seemed completely relaxed as he spoke.

Dulles is a tall, well-built man of about 190 pounds. He looks younger than his 60 years and bears only a slight family resemblance to his famous brother, John Foster Dulles, our Secretary of State.

He wore what is considered an Allen Dulles "uniform"—a tweed suit and a pipe that he kept putting in and taking out of his mouth. With his bristly mustache and bouncy youthful manner he reminds a lot of people of the old Roughrider, Teddy Roosevelt, in his slimmer days. Yet Dulles looks more like a prep school headmaster than the wily master spy history has proven him to be.

In reply to my question, "How good is the CIA?" Dulles bit on his pipe and thought a moment.

"Well, that's a tough one. It's hard to say how good the Central Intelligence Agency is; but I can say that we're always improving. I can't say that I'm satisfied. If I were, it would be time to hang up and quit. In this business, you can never be satisfied that you're doing enough. There's always another idea you haven't thought of."

The next question was a touchy one. "The American people," I said, "have always been afraid that we can't hold a candle to the rest of the world in espionage and intelligence work. Is that true?"

"No, it's not," Dulles said firmly. "Our intelligence work is not inferior to other countries—although we have one great fault. We talk too much for our own good. We're improving all the time," he repeated, "but you see it takes years for a man to learn the very complicated intelligence business. We have ten years experience counting the OSS during World War II. In ten more years, our career men will be that much better."

Next, I asked Dulles about training agents. "Does the CIA have a special school for its agents?"

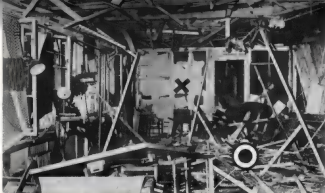
"Yes," Dulles answered, "but I'm afraid I'm not free to say much more about it." The exact location of the CIA school is secret, but we do know that many of Dulles' agents-in-training spend up to two years learning to speak, read, and write a variety of languages.

"Is the CIA as good as the Russian intelligence network?" I next asked.

The CIA chief pondered this a bit. "Well, let's say that we still don't put as much emphasis on intelligence work as the Communists do."

Mr. Dulles was just being modest, at least if what the Russians say about him is true. According to the Kremlin, the insidious spy work of the "imperialist warmonger" Allen Dulles is threatening the entire Communist world. His agents, they claim, have wormed their way behind the Iron Curtain from East Berlin to Shanghai.

There have been a number of reports tying Allen Dulles'



As European OSS Chief, Dulles helped plot attempted bomb assassination of Hitler (center). Gen. Ludwig Beck (left),

was to take over German government. Dulles smuggled his chief contact man, Bernd Gisevius (right), out of Germany

CIA in with espionage and sabotage behind the Iron Curtain. Our agents have supposedly been thoroughly trained to use such innovations as plastic explosives that are put on a building as easily as chewing gum, and microfilm that will hide a complete four-page document under a postage stamp.

But this is only penny-ante stuff, the Communists say. According to them, Allen Dulles has been using American cash and a tremendous network of "spies, informers, kulaks, reactionaries, fascists, and Wall Street stooges" to foment revolution behind the Iron Curtain.

Using a plan masterminded by Allen Dulles, the Reds say, CIA agents behind the Iron Curtain are cutting communication wires, slowing down factory production, disrupting civilian morale, and worst of all, plotting with disgruntled Communist satellite bosses to overthrow Russia's puppet governments in Eastern Europe.

This is one Communist claim that doesn't sound like a Vishinsky fairy tale. The Reds connect Allen Dulles with every Eastern European leader who has gone to the gallows for "cooperating with the imperialist west." His name has become a curse word in the hallways of the MVD secret police in Moscow.

The Dulles plan against Russia, according to the Communist New York *Daily Worker*, is officially called "Project X." One of Dulles' boldest schemes—a daring plot to overthrow the Hungarian Communist government of Premier Rakosi—was recently described in detail in a series of articles in the *Daily Worker* and called "Espionage, Inc." It was also discussed in detail in a British Communist pamphlet, "Gloak and Dollar War."

Allen Dulles set the fantastic scheme into operation back in 1944, when he was still in the OSS, the Communists claim. Dulles was worried that Eastern Europe would be gobbled up by the Reds. He made contact with six important Hungarian refugees in Switzerland. One of them was Dr. Tibor Szonyi, a prominent pre-war politician.

The refugees returned to Hungary right after the war. Under orders from Dulles, the Kremlin says, Szonyi and his friends, now agents of America, became active members of the Communist Party. Szonyi rose to the strategic position of Personnel Chief of the Communist Party. After a few years, Laszlo Rajk, the powerful secretary of the Hungarian Party, was brought into the conspiracy. He was to become head of the government after Rakosi was kicked out by their revolution.

In time, the CIA reportedly took over activities of the OSS. According to the Communists, our CIA contact man was Lieutenant Colonel Kopsack, the American military attache in Budapest. He was later kicked out of Hungary by the Communists. They claimed he had photographed secret military installations on the Hungarian-Yugoslav border and had worked with 40 anti-Communist collaborators.

[Continued on page 44]



Gen. Karl Wolff, World War II Nazi Chief of HB in Italy, arranged with Dulles the surrender of 600,000 troops.



The author broke Tex Purvis' camp record for the year by bringing down this 13-point bull elk at 350 yards. Tex guarantees every hunter a shot at trophy game.

After horses, hunters and pack mules are driven to supply camp 70 miles from town, they move on to second camp (below). Here, actual hunting begins. Trips last one week.

I Hunted With America's Top Outfitter

All you do is bring your sleeping bag and rifle. Tex Purvis of Jackson, Wyoming will furnish the rest, and set you up for a clean shot at trophy game

by Clyde Ormond

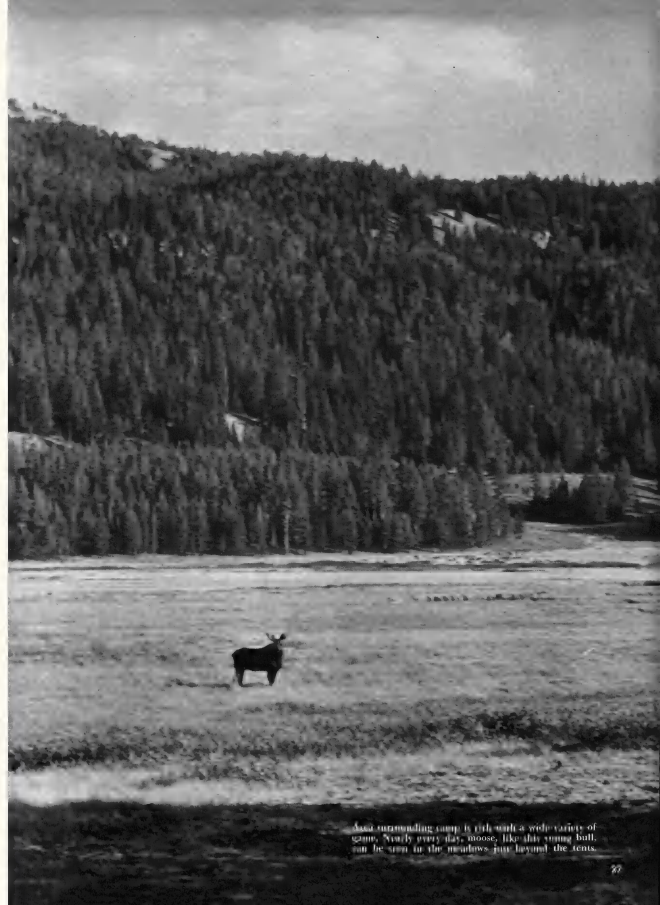
Marshall Tex Purvis is currently billed as "America's Top Outfitter," and at long last I was off on one of his famous luxury hunts after big game—this time for elk.

These are expensive hunts, \$500 for seven days, and \$65 for each additional day. They're set up for the well-heeled sportsman, and the person who saves for his "dream hunt." On my trip I was to discover a top-flight expedition which I'd never experienced in a lifetime of big-game hunting.

From the word go, the hunter begins to see that a Tex Purvis hunt is no ordinary affair. For example, you don't just get off the train at Jackson, Wyoming, where Tex lives, and have him meet you. The closest train gets to this rugged little western town, set near the foot of the majestic Teton Mountains, is Victor, Idaho.

If you come by train, you get off at Victor, and are hauled the 26 miles over Teton Pass on the mail truck. You begin to feel the "atmosphere" of the country when you learn that the driver of the mail jeep is a grandmother, Mrs. Jim Raina, who makes the daily trip winter and summer. This cheerful, enthusiastic little lady drives the hair-pin turns up over the 8,500-foot Teton Pass, casually telling her passenger of 10-foot snows, of chaining up the wheels only three times one winter trip, or of a running avalanche that buried





Area surrounding camp is rich with a wide variety of game. Nearly every day, moose, like this young bull, can be seen in the meadows just beyond the tents.



More than 1,000 sets of elk antlers form arch in Jackson, Wyoming, Purvis' home. Each year, 6,000 elk are killed in state, which has nation's largest herd.

All hunts start from Jackson, located at the base of the Teton Mountains. From here, the parties cross Two Ocean Pass and camp on rugged eastern slopes.



her husband. On the Wyoming side of the descent, the road goes right by Tex's 720-acre horse ranch, used as a stock pasture.

If you fly, you're met just outside Jackson at the airstrip by Tex in the big station wagon. If you drive, any number of oiled highways lead into Jackson since it's on the Yellowstone Park network of roads.

Once in town, you go straight to the Purvis town home. There you're met by the charming Mrs. Purvis, maybe lift a highball and begin talking about the big hunt.

From that point on, till the hunt is finished and you're here, your worries are ended. Tex takes over, sees that you're fed, housed, taken to the hunting country, guided to the game you came after, and brought back safe and happy.

The sportsman brings only his sleeping bag, rifle (or tackle), his clothes and personal effects. Everything else is supplied with the price of the trip.

With the big trip ready to start, hunters, guides, and cooks, together with their equipment, are hauled some 70 miles to the big supply camp at Turpin Meadows. This camp has previously been set up with horse corrals, feed sheds, and equipment tents. All the pack mules and riding horses have been trucked in from the 720-acre Three Smokes Ranch in Jackson Hole. From the supply camp, hunters and equipment go by pack train to the base camp at the headwaters of the Yellowstone River.

Similarly, spring expeditions for bear originate in Jackson; and the party goes to such jumping-off spots as the wilderness Flagg Ranch. Antelope hunting parties are moved, likewise, to the Rawlins-Lander areas where the herds are and where the actual hunt begins. Float trips for trout fishing or photography may begin on Green River, in the Pinedale area. Or they may begin at Lewis Lake, the Snake River, or by pack train into Divide country lakes.

By keeping his outfit mobile, and not tied down to one permanent location, Tex is a far jump ahead of his competitors. His advertised motto is "We start where the fish and game are." Because of this policy, he can actually live in town, but move his complete outfit to any locality.

The fall hunts are the big expeditions in any outfitter's operation. And for his hunting country, Tex has chosen the primitive Thorofare-Yellowstone region. This is one of Wyoming's best remaining big-game areas for sheep, elk, moose, brown and black bears, and grizzlies. It's wild, rugged, Continental Divide country. For the fall hunts the main game is, of course, elk.

Purvis chose this remote area against his competitors' predictions that he couldn't "civilize" an area that far away from cities or towns. But in three years, Tex has proven that he could, to the extent that other outfitters are now attempting to guide parties into the same general area. Incidentally, there is a gentleman's understanding among outfitters that they don't overlap each other's territories. And since Wyoming law requires that each non-resident hunter be accompanied by a licensed guide, the complete arrangement prevents infringing on regions hunted by other outfits.

The 30-mile trail ride from Turpin Meadows to the big base camp is a thrill all its own. The hunter is in game country before he's a quarter-mile out, and is apt to see moose, bear, or elk most anywhere. Purvis uses nothing but prime geldings for his guests to ride. These mountain horses can make the 30 miles in one long day. All duffel and equipment is brought in on pack mules. Lunches are prepared in advance, and the entire party eats in the saddle.

Near the base camp, which is the hunting camp, the party crosses Two Ocean Pass—called the "top of the world." There, in a tiny meadow hemmed in by rugged, pine-dressed mountain peaks, a little rivulet of water comes down out of a slash canyon, divides, and flows off in two directions. The water running east becomes Atlantic Creek, and that going west becomes Pacific Creek.

The base camp, near the headwaters of the Yellowstone River, looks out over meadowlands, and Hawk's Rest—a jutting mountain, famous as a landmark used by early adventurers. When he arrives at this wilderness spot, the hunter first notices the big tent (set up in advance) which houses the hundreds of pounds of food hauled in by mules, panniers and on decker saddles. Here, a full-time cook prepares most anything the hunters want—from ham and eggs, hotcakes, coffee, and strawberry jam in the morning, to freshly baked pies and elk steak for supper.

Adjacent to the cook tent is the dining tent where the hunters eat at big tables, and are served by the cook dressed in white cap and apron. Scattered under the pines are the small sleeping tents which come in both single and double sizes. These tents are individually heated, equipped with gasoline lanterns, and have wooden bunks. Sleeping bags are thrown on top.

Farther back in the pines is the corral. A full-time wrangler tends the horses, and sees that the saddles and gear are kept in tiptop shape. Back in the thicker pines is a meat-rack. As soon as you bag your trophy, the guide skins it out for you, salts it, and hangs the quarters in clean, cotton meat bags.

Purvis' role in all this, as outfitter, is that of master organizer. A good outfitter has to be a jack-of-all-trades, and a master of organization. His job demands that he provide equipment, guides, transportation, and good hunting areas for his guests. Once at camp, the hunter is turned over to experienced, licensed guides who are all mountain men, know stock and big game and where to find it, and lead the guest to his trophy. Tex's guides are the best, most experienced men he can find. He pays the highest guide wages in Wyoming to make sure that he keeps the cream of the crop. From start to finish, every aspect of a Tex Purvis hunt is aimed at a "rough-it-in-luxury" type expedition.

This partly explains the fact that Purvis' rates are just about double those of other outfitters. The real explanation lies in the attractiveness of one crowning difference in a Tex Purvis trip: Tex guarantees the hunter a shot at his game. No shot, no charge for the trip. This guarantee means that a Purvis guide will provide you with a shot at the game you're after and at a distance of less than 200 yards. On fish, it means a catch of the species you're after. Float trips for fish, incidentally, cost \$245 for seven days.

This policy of guaranteeing the hunter his game was so novel and unheard of among other outfitters that I asked Tex about it.

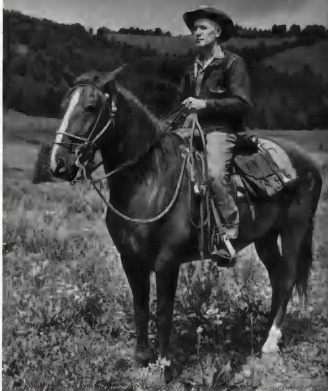
"When I first started in the outfitting business," he explained, "I looked all around at what other outfitters were offering. And I couldn't find one type of expedition that offered a hunter what I considered full value for his dollar. If I was a hunting guest, I'd first of all want to get into real game country that hadn't been hunted to death. I'd want to be assured of getting my trophy. If I paid for an advertised first class trip, I'd want all services to be first class. And finally, I'd want some kind of guarantee that everything would be as represented."

Not long after Tex made his services known, top-flight sportsmen from all over the country began flocking to him.

During his first year of business, 1951, when most Wyoming outfitters were finding elk for only 50 per cent of their customers, Tex hung up an astounding record of 100 per cent success for his hunters. As if this weren't enough, Purvis sold his hunters on the notion of taking only male elk, and came out with a perfect score on trophy bulls! When I signed in for my trip last fall, the camp record was still 100 per cent.

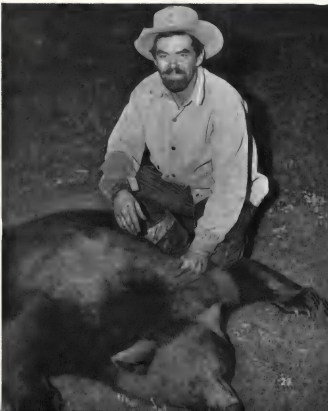
My first chance came the fifth day of the trip. I was zig-zagging down off the peaks of "goat" country, when Forest, my guide, suddenly pointed. There in the dim game trail was a fresh elk bed. The pine needles were still matted, and the sweet, musky odor of a bull elk was fresh.

The horses, trained to hunt, [Continued on page 42]



Purvis, astride favorite horse, Cochise, waits for trek to base camp to begin. All horses, trained for hunting, make 50-mile trip in one day. Novice riders find it rough.

Forest Sterling, one of Purvis' ace guides, grins proudly over a big brown bear he led his hunter to. Purvis also outfits and guides sportsmen on float trips for fishing.



"Why should you care about the women upstairs?"
Party demanded. "You're the daughter of a murder-
er, and if you klobber, dear sister, I'll kill you."





the case of the **Sobbing Owl**

By day beautiful Patty Hanley killed her guests
with kindness. By night she just plain killed them.
Her final score was 24—a record that still stands

by **William B. Hartley**

Illustrated by Howell Dodd

The child had heard the sound before—a curious throbbing call that came from the woods beyond the cabin clearing. It was clear as a flute during the first seconds, but it always broke on a throaty, gurgling note. Sometimes it sounded during the early evening hours; sometimes it penetrated the silence of the dark moments before dawn.

"An owl," the child's mother had said. But Lucretia Patricia Hanley knew it was not an owl. No owl made a sound like that. And no owl could make her father rise from bed at midnight, dress, and stride across the clearing to the woods. The child had often watched from the tiny window in the loft, while her brother and sister lay trembling on the common pallet.

"What is it, Patty?" they had asked. And Lucretia Patricia, turning from the window, had repeated her mother's explanation.

"It's that old owl calling her'n. Go to sleep."

The explanation had satisfied Betty and James Hanley; the owl call ceased to frighten them and they rarely awakened when it sounded from the woods. But Lucretia Patricia always slipped from her place at the edge of the pallet to kneel by the window and stare across the moonlit clearing.

Tonight it had sounded twice. At the first call, in the hour after dark, Lucretia Patricia's father had left the cabin. The second call had come in the pre-dawn hours. There had been a strange violence and urgency in the second call; and Lucretia Patricia, kneeling now at the window, trembled as she gazed across the empty clearing.

The moon was still high enough to give a strong, cold light. With the dying of the owl cry, Lucretia saw her mother step into the clearing.

When the owl cry was repeated, she walked toward

the center of the clearing. A figure detached itself from the shadows of the woods and ran to meet the woman. Suddenly Lucretia's mother spread her arms and screamed, "Ah-!-!-!"

At the sound the stranger turned and fled, half-crouching, into the black woods.

Lucretia, hugging her shoulders and trembling, watched her mother stagger toward the cabin. She heard the door latch drop into place. Then a soft mumbling sound filled the cabin—the whimpering of a fright-crazed woman.

Lucretia found her way down the loft ladder.

"What is it?" she whispered to her mother. "What did he say?"

"Ah!-!-!-!" her mother muttered in the strange tongue Lucretia knew was gypsy talk. The woman reached for the child's wrists, but Lucretia pulled away.

"In English," she said sharply. "Tell me!"

"Your father killed a man," the older woman whispered.

"He'll get away!" Lucretia said fiercely.

"No. His friend said he is caught. He will be killed."

"But what happened?"

"Better you should not know. Go to bed. Ah, God! Don't tell your brother and sister."

Lucretia climbed slowly to the loft and lay down beside Betty and James. Staring into the darkness, she puzzled over her mother's unbelievable words. Why had her father killed a man? What had the man done and what was the meaning of the owl's cry?

Above all, where was her father? "He is caught," Lucretia's mother had said. "He will be killed."

"I shall know what happened!" the child told herself. "And my father won't be killed!"

During the days that followed, Lucretia pieced together scraps of information until she knew the entire story. From her mother the girl learned that her father, Lucius Hanley, was an Englishman of noble birth who had outraged his family by marrying a gypsy. Forced out of England by the anger of his father, the young nobleman and his wild, black-haired bride had settled in Montreal. Lucretia had been born shortly after their arrival in the New World.

From Montreal, the Hanleys had moved south to St. Johns on the St. Johns river (today the Richelieu) where Hanley erected a cabin. The settlement of St. Johns, midway between Montreal and the border of the young United States, was an excellent location for smugglers; and Hanley had easily been persuaded to join one of the bands of border ruffians.

The smuggling business had been profitable, for the American government, torn by the aftermath of the Revolution and the disorder of the weak confederation of colonies, was in no position to stamp out smuggling. When the owl sobbed in the night, wealth had poured into the breeches of Lucius Hanley. But the owl had sobbed once too often.

"Your father," said Lucretia's mother, "learned that a man named Payne had spied out his secret."

"Your father," the neighbors told the child, "put his hatchet in Alex Payne's head. A thing!"

"... in bed, he killed him!"

"A knife in the heart to seal it, child!"

And it was true, of course. Lucretia Patricia had to believe it, for her father had been seized as he fled from Payne's house. The neighbors had deputized three men to take Lucius Hanley to Montreal for trial.

"Hang him up, they will!" Lucretia's mother moaned. "We should never have left Yorkshire for this terrible country!"

The waiting was over almost as soon as it was begun. On a cold spring afternoon, they hung Lucius Hanley.

That night an owl called from the woods, but it was a true owl. Lucretia Patricia knew it for a fair cry, because it ended in a shriek rather than a sob, and it pierced her brain like a needle. Until the day of her death, Lucretia would never be far from the call of the sobbing owl.

When the period of mourning was finished, the gypsy hardness of Lucretia's mother asserted itself. She was still young and still had the reserves of energy born out of her early years in the gypsy camps of England and France. She decided to enlarge her cabin and turn it into a tavern and inn. The location, midway between Montreal and the upper reaches of Lake Champlain, was excellent, for travelers passed through St. Johns both by river and by land.

The tavern prospered. By the day of Mr. Washington's inauguration, Mrs. Hanley's tavern was respected throughout the northland. The children of Mrs. Hanley were also respected—particularly the one the men called Patty. Lucretia Patricia was now 16 years of age—a tall, stately girl with the black hair and eyes of her Romany mother and the excellent complexion of her English father. Life in the tavern had sharpened her wits and her conversation. It was said in the neighborhood that Patty Hanley could have any young man she desired. A few of the old cronies whispered that she was waiting for a man who looked like her father.

Mr. Washington was only a few weeks in office when the man appeared. He was a handsome young wheelwright from Delaware, and when he asked for a bed his voice was soft as honey. His voice also trembled, for he had taken a fever during his travels.

Mrs. Hanley eyed him sharply and led him to a bed in the family's section of the inn. When the young man fainted, the gypsy ran a practiced hand over his money bag. It was full—here was a young man who deserved good care.

"There's a sick one in James' bed," Mrs. Hanley told Patty. "You're to watch him."

Lucretia Patricia heaped robes on the young stranger and placed hot stones at his side to sweat him. When he was able to open his eyes, she fed him venison broth and steaming rum.

"You have a name," she said when the young man could speak.

"Alonzo Cannon, a Delaware man," the stranger whispered.

Lucretia Patricia Hanley, daughter of a murderer and child of a gypsy, became Mrs. Alonzo Cannon 10 days after Alonzo was able to walk by himself. And right after the wedding they left for southwestern Delaware. There, at a point on the Nanticoke River, Alonzo Cannon established a wheelwright's shop and a small pole ferry.

Patty Cannon was pleased with her new home during the first few years in Delaware. The Cannons prospered, and Patty bore her husband a daughter who was named Jenny. Three years passed pleasantly, with Patty occupied in the duties of motherhood.

Then the first trouble began. Patty began to take in overnight guests—travelers who crossed the Nanticoke on the ferry. The life in her mother's inn had accustomed her to the companionship of large groups, and she felt happiest when her table was crowded and the rooms of her house fully occupied. Alonzo Cannon was not greatly pleased, however, to find his home turned into a wayside hostel; his displeasure increased when it became evident that Patty welcomed irrepressible wayfarers as readily as she did decent folk.

The change in the relations between Patty and her husband was a gradual one. Not until the end of the first three years was there an outright quarrel between the two. It came on a warm summer night, shortly after the Cannons had retired to their bedroom.

"I've had a fill of this inn-keeping," Alonzo said sharply. "I don't want my wife to be a friend of strangers. We'll have an end to it."

Patty examined her husband's face coldly. "I'll choose my friends," she said, "and those who wish to stay here may do so."

The argument raged for an hour. At last Patty swept out of the bedroom, to spend the night in the room occupied by her young daughter.

Toward morning, Alonzo was awakened by a curious sound. He listened drowsily, cursed, and went back to sleep. In the moment before sleep returned, he thought he heard the click of a falling latch.

At breakfast, he tried to repair the damage of the night's argument. Patty, he observed, was as gay as usual; her tempers, reflecting her gypsy heritage, could turn from fury to good humor in a matter of moments.

"Last night," said Alonzo, "I was awakened by the call of an owl. A strange call, indeed."

"I heard it," Patty replied. "Strange it was, but an owl has the gift of mummery. I have heard . . ." And Patty became silent.

The next day Alonzo Cannon fell ill. He was seized by violent cramps, his face turned the color of flour and he suffered intensely from nausea. Patty called a doctor who bled the patient, in the manner of the times, but the bleeding did nothing to improve Alonzo's condition. He died in agony.

With the help of neighbors, Patty arranged for the burial of her husband. Then Lucretia Patricia Hanley Cannon found herself a widow in a strange country, encumbered by a child and without means of support.

"I can run an inn," Patty told the neighbors, "but it won't be here, in a house filled with memories."

For two weeks Patty traveled the roads of southwestern Delaware, in search of an advantageous location. At last she found what she wanted—a solid, two-story building that stood in Maryland at a crossroads near the Delaware line. To make the arrangement perfect, a farmhouse could be purchased on the Delaware side of the line, a short distance from the inn. Patty, a woman whose childhood had been spent in a border town, knew there were certain advantages in living on a border, with a business in one area of civil jurisdiction and a residence in another.

The tavern and farmhouse were purchased, and Patty established a comfortable living. True, the neighbors complained that her inn was frequented by rough strange men who plied curious trades on the Nanticoke River, but Patty could point out that an inn was a public place, open to all.

Remembering the bitter winters in St. Johns, Patty wrote to her sister Betty, inviting the girl to join her in Delaware. Betty could care for the farmhouse and daughter Jen while Patty ran the tavern. She also took, as bound boy, a seven-year-old lad named Cyrus James. When Cyrus was old enough, he would be useful in overseeing the slaves Patty had purchased.

When Betty arrived from the north, she found that her sister Patty was a prosperous woman. Child-bearing and the sorrow of her husband's death had left no mark on Patty's face; her hair was as black as ever, and the young

men of the neighborhood were as attentive as they had been in St. Johns. It seemed to Betty that her sister had everything a woman could desire.

Pleased though she was with her sister's prosperity, Betty was not happy about the patrons of the tavern. As the daughter of an inn keeper, Betty was accustomed to rough men; but the men who frequented Patty's tavern were rough beyond any in Betty's experience. Perry Hutton was one such man—a tough, sour-faced youngster who seemed to occupy a high place in Patty's favor. Joe and Ebenezer Johnson were two other constant patrons whose behaviour troubled Betty.

"Why don't you discourage those men?" Betty asked her sister.

And Patty, smiling gently, replied, "They're my friends. In a little while, I'm going to have Joe Johnson manage the tavern."

"I shall not be friendly with them," said Betty.

Patty looked at her sister with a curious iciness that startled the girl. "You," Patty said, "are the daughter of a murderer and a gypsy. Be damned to your notions."

The local tipplers quickly learned not to accept Patty's challenges—she could throw a man the length of the tavern.



That night, the two sisters slept together in the farmhouse. Shortly after midnight, Betty was awakened by a strange sound.

While she trembled beneath the bed quilts, her sister rose and dressed. Betty heard the door of the farmhouse slam. Presently hoof beats echoed from the direction of the stable, then died slowly in the distance.

At breakfast, Patty joked with the servants and caressed her child, Jenny.

"You did not come back to bed last night," Betty said at last.

"No. I slept on the couch downstairs."

"Did you ride somewhere? I heard a horse."

"You imagined it."

But Betty had not imagined the sound of pounding hoofs. Later in the morning she found mud on her sister's riding boots. At noon she noticed the farm slaves in an excited huddle.

"What's the trouble with you?" she demanded.

"Nothing, Miss Betty. Only they's a dead man on the Laurel pike."

Two slave dealers, it seemed, had been intercepted by robbers as they rode toward Laurel. One had been murdered; the other, although seriously wounded, had managed to escape. According to his story, he and his companion had been attacked by four riders between Cannon's tavern and Laurel.

Betty was not a fool. She began to understand the implications of the owl's cry and her sister's midnight ride, and her suspicions terrified her. At the same time, she loved her sister. And flight was impossible—she had no money. It was best, she decided, to forget the previous night and devote herself to little Jen.

Almost eight years passed before Betty found the courage to eavesdrop on one of her sister's midnight conferences. On a burning July night in the early 1800's she awakened at the owl's call and crept to the window. Her sister, she saw, was talking excitedly with Joe Johnson.

"Perry Hutton, it was," Johnson was saying. "The fool, the fool!"

"He killed the driver?" Patty's voice carried clearly in the night air. "I told him to be careful."

"No matter. He's gone. They'll hang him for certain."

"And what if he talks?"

"The ship is ready."

"What happened to the mail?"

"The sheriff got it when he took Perry."

The following morning Patty drew Betty into the farmyard.

Patty, now in her early thirties, had acquired a fierce, autocratic air with the passage of the years. It had become her habit to wear men's clothing and to carry a heavily weighted riding crop. She was carrying it now, and she slapped it furiously against her boots.

"I suppose you listened last night," she snapped.

"Yes," Betty whispered.

"If you blabber, my dear sister, I shall kill you. Now listen to me. . ."

The story Patty Cannon told her sister was terrifying. She was the leader of a gang of highwaymen. Joe and Ebenezer Johnson were members of the group, along with a man named Butler, John Griffin, Ted Bowen and Perry Hutton.

Recently she had purchased a large sloop, if Hutton died without talking, she intended to put the sloop to use in a new business.

"I shall steal free Negroes from the north," she told her sister, "and sell them to the slavers!"

"Where will you keep them?"

"Here. Up in the attic."

"But how about Jen?" Betty cried.

"Jen," said Patty, "is old enough to marry. Joe Johnson wants her. They'll be married in a month."

Perry Hutton died without talking, however, and Patty, aided by the Johnsons, built a prison in the attic of her farmhouse. The room, solidly boarded, almost airless and only 12 feet square, was directly above Betty's room; in coming weeks Betty would hear the moaning of her sisters' captives.

Daughter Jen was married to Joe Johnson, just as Patty desired. The pair made their home in the tavern; and Johnson, aided by his brother, took charge of the kidnapping. Betty Hanley, tortured by the sounds in the attic of the farmhouse, received Patty's permission to live at the tavern with Jen.

Patty moved between the tavern and the farm, according to the requirements of the moment. When Johnson was in the north, she managed the tavern. When the farmhouse dungeon was filled, she stayed at the farm to guard the prisoners.

Despite her success in the kidnapping business, Patty still enjoyed the violence of an occasional midnight ride, a holdup and, in some instances, a brutal killing.

One fall evening a prosperous slave dealer named Bell rode into the tavern yard. "I'll have dinner," Bell ordered, "and I may stay overnight. I'm carrying money, and I don't like to be on the roads at night."

"You're a wise man," Patty agreed softly. "Have some ale in the common while I arrange your dinner."

Late that night Cyrus James saw a curious sight—one that he would remember for the rest of his life. Rising before dawn to attend to the farm chores, he saw the silhouettes of three figures against the faint light of the eastern sky. They were carrying a large object—a chest of some sort—toward an isolated corner of the farm.

Betty Hanley also had a curious experience on the day following Bell's disappearance. She was sewing in her room above the tavern hall when she smelled the odor of burning cloth. She hurried downstairs to find her sister poking something into the fireplace.

"I thought I noticed a stench of burning wool," Betty explained.

Patty looked at her coldly. "I'm burning an old skirt," she said.

As Patty Cannon entered the middle years of her life, she became heavy and as powerful as a man. She still affected men's breeches and jackets and when the mood struck her she would challenge the local tipplers to wrestling matches. They quickly learned not to accept—she could easily throw a man the length of the tavern. The neighboring farmers called her Terrible Patty Cannon, and feared her as they feared the devil.

Only toward Jen and Betty was Patty gentle, and most of this gentleness was reserved for Jen. When Jen gave birth to a child, a small black-haired girl who was named Patricia after her grandmother, Patty's joy was intense.

On a morning in April of 1829, a tenant farmer who worked a portion of Patty's land felt his plough strike an obstruction. Examination disclosed the object as being a large wooden chest. A few blows of an ax split the cover and showed the chest contained a human skeleton. The farmer carried his news to Constable Thomas H. Hicks.

Hicks talked to the slaves at Patty's farm; he also talked to Cyrus James, now a grown man and overseer of the farm help. "I seen them plant that box," James told Hicks, "and I know what's in it. The bones are the remains of a man named Bell. He never left the inn with his horse, and I seen Patty bury the box."

On the testimony of Cyrus James, Patty was indicted for murder. James also implicated the Johnsons and several other members of the gang.

Further questioning revealed that Cyrus James had been forced to participate in some of the robberies. Hicks arrested him, and then gathered a posse of six neighbors. The problem was to lure Patty Cannon from her tavern, on Maryland soil, to the Delaware [Continued on page 43]

Despite all the screams about buying a pennant, the Yankees paid less than \$150,000 for the team that started and won the first game of the '53 series.



Baseball's Biggest Lie

Here's the other side of the Yankee story, the side many baseball people won't talk about—even though it's true

By Paul Gardner

When the New York Yankees defeated the Brooklyn Dodgers in the World Series last October, a disgruntled Brooklyn fan, uncertain whether to commit suicide or wait until next year, finally snorted:

"Well, what do you expect? They're the richest club in baseball and they outbid everybody for the winning teams."

There it was again—baseball's biggest lie, the same lie many a frantic owner has encouraged when he found that merely firing the manager did not satisfy a team's followers. It is the lie that provided a base for the now wide-spread hatred of the Yankees.

When you glance back at the 1953 Yankee lineup and back again at the 1954 lineup you realize, with some shock, that it is one of the bargain teams of baseball. There was no magic, no mint of money which established this latest record-breaking club dynasty. It was all just the work of an outstanding organization.

Some of these men came from other teams in the majors who had considered them expendable. Others were "home-grown" products whom the Yankee scouts found in the bushes. Yet even among the "home-grown" are players who were turned away by other teams.

Phil Rizzuto is one of these. The shortstop, a native New Yorker, whom Ty Cobb rates with the immortals of his own time, was rejected by both the Giants and Dodgers. Bill Terry, the blunt Giant manager, told Phil he would be better off with a shoe shine box. Ironically, Casey Stengel, then Dodger manager, ushered Phil out of Ebbets Field when the young infielder was hit by a pitched ball. But Paul Krichell and the Yankee scouts went along with Rizzuto—to everybody else's chagrin.

Yogi Berra, from The Hill section of St. Louis, was blithely informed by Branch Rickey that he had no chance of making the Cardinals. Johnny Schulte of the Yankees



A perfect peg from Woodling, the man they said couldn't throw to Berra, the man they said couldn't catch, nails Gil Hodges in one of the most vital plays of the series.

eventually signed Yogi and the slow development began. It will be recalled that he was something of a goat in the 1947 World Series. But Bill Dickey, the Yankee coach, continued to teach him the niceties. Today he is the second best all-around catcher in baseball with only Roy Campanella of the Dodgers surpassing him.

Gil McDougald's stance at the plate seemed to preclude his chances of lasting in the majors, but the Yankees stuck with it and with McDougald. Gil justified their faith. And he, too, like Berra and Rizuto was picked up for a song.

The St. Louis Browns might have had Mickey Mantle if the front office had heeded a letter touting the wonder when he was with the Ban Johnson League near his native town of Commerce, Okla. The Yankees followed up on a letter they received—as they do with the thousand-odd a year they get—and Scout Tom Greenwade landed Mantle for a thousand dollars.

Of the remaining regulars Collins and Bauer are "homegrown" products while Woodling and Martin were purchased from other clubs.

Woodling cost money because of his minor league record, but he had failed with Cleveland and the Pirates. He came of age at the Yankee Stadium.

Martin, the hero of last year's World Series, was bought from Oakland, but was sent to the Yankee farm at Kansas City for seasoning.

The pitching staff, too, was a mixture of "home-grown" and veterans obtained from other teams. Reynolds, who was accused of lacking staying power at Cleveland, became a great star at Yankee Stadium—and the experts say a lot of the credit for this goes to Jim Turner, Yankee pitching coach.

Vic Raschi, the Springfield Rifle, was a "homegrown" star, while Ed Lopat, the veteran left-hander, had come from the White Sox.

Jim McDonald, a Red Sox and Browns discard, won an important World Series game from the Dodgers last October.

Ed Ford tried out with the Giants and Dodgers, but it was the Yankees who picked him up.

In the last five years, or since the current streak began, it has been obvious that the Yankees have spent less for their key players than any of their major rivals—the Indians, Red Sox and White Sox. These clubs, particularly the Red Sox, have lost sleep for years wondering how to catch the Yanks.

Tom Yawkey of the Red Sox, after an all-out effort to purchase a ready-made pennant winner with established players, has come around to the idea of a better farm system. Yet it was just less than two years ago that Yawkey announced the Red Sox had 17 bonus players, none of whom cost less than \$40,000. That adds up to nearly three-quarters of a million. It was Yawkey, too, who in 1947 paid out \$400,000 and 10 Red Sox hands for four St. Louis Browns' players. All that resulted was further frustration. And it was Yawkey who paid \$250,000 for Joe Cronin of the Senators in 1935 and fortunes for Lefty Grove and Jimmy Foxx of the Athletics, among others.

Bill Veeck's Indians cracked the Yankee monopoly in 1948 but it was a single gasp. Whereas the Yanks keep the stream of replacements going, the Indians can't seem to achieve the requisite balance. Rosen, Boone, Avila and Easter have faltered defensively. If the Yanks had holes, you could be sure they'd plug them quickly. But the best the Indians could do to solve their shortstop problem was George Strickland, a Pirate cast-off.

Everything the Yanks do, from Class D up, is part of a large general pattern, supervised by George Weiss. When it comes to choosing cogs in a wheel, the Yankee front office drives strong men frantic. In 1950 they picked up Mize for the waiver price just before the pennant was clinched. The next year it was Johnny Sain of the Braves. In '52 Ewell Blackwell of the Reds was tapped. Hank Greenberg of the Indians finally forced a change in the waiver rules.

The White Sox, with Frank Lane in the saddle, have been striving desperately to overhaul the consistent Yankees. Lane will trade with anybody and everybody. The White Sox also procured a number of bonus players who failed to come up with the goods. The main reason for their remarkable recent challenges has been the outstanding managerial job done by Paul Richards. But it requires more than a brilliant manager to win pennants.

The Yankee ability to see greatness in men others have passed over is not restricted to players. Casey Stengel was a failure before he came to the Stadium. Buckey Harris recalled the days of his Washington glory a generation before but, in short order, he was a pennant and world series winner with the Yankees in 1947.

Despite all the stories of the Yankees' successes, they have pulled some "rocks." Everybody does in baseball. The sale of Bob Porterfield, last year's sensation with the Senators, as well as the disposal of Shea and Jensen to the same ball club, would make it look as if the Yankee general manager were outwitted. And the purchase of Fred Sanford from the Browns for \$100,000 would never send a negotiator to the head of the class. However, in every instance save that of Sanford, Yankee spokesmen will disclose where there was good logic in these deals.

General Manager George Weiss took up where Ed Barrow left off to give New York baseball's smoothest organization.



Weiss was satisfied that Noren provided insurance for Mickey Mantle, when the latter injured his knee in the 1951 Series. That Mantle had an excellent 1952 season pleased the Yanks no end. Yet Weiss felt that Noren fitted in beautifully last year. The World Series' relief chores that Bob Kuzava accomplished against the Giants in 1951 and the Dodgers in 1952, comforted the Yanks despite the amazing comeback of Bob Porterfield who went to the Senators in the trade.

The Yankees do not throw their money away, any statements to the contrary notwithstanding. The dynasty was begun in 1919 when, in a period of four years, the late Yankee owner, Col. Jake Ruppert, shelled out half a million dollars in deflationary days to purchase Babe Ruth, Waite Hoyt, Herb Pennock, Carl Mays, Jumping Joe Dugan, Wally Schaag, Joe Bush and Everett Scott from the Red Sox. But, by 1932, when Weiss went in as chief aide to Ed Barrow, superior organization was already behind the Yankee conquest.

Nowadays, what with the war and the decline of the minor leagues, there are not too many players to go around for trading purposes. Weiss has always been unusually shrewd in appraising human baseball flesh. He bought Tommy Henrich, a free agent, for \$20,000. Joe DiMaggio was brought in for \$25,000, but this deal was consummated because Weiss had five players to throw in with the deal.

While spending perhaps a million dollars for ball players in 22 years, Weiss has disposed of carloads for over two and a quarter of a million dollars. That spells profit. Deals involving Willard Hershberger, Buddy Hassett and, more recently, Don Bollweg, will illustrate how the astute mind of the impenetrable Weiss operates.

Weiss maneuvered Hershberger from \$500 into \$92,000. Hassett from a small bonus of \$3,000 into \$105,000 for the Yankees—and he picked up Bollweg rather casually, as part of the deal, when he sold Billy Johnson to the Cardinals. Bollweg proved extremely valuable as a first base alternate last year.

Hershberger was bought by the Yankees for a small bonus—then, in 1937, the catcher was sold to Cincinnati for \$20,000. Weiss, who has a habit of casually asking for an extra little old ball player, requested one from the Reds and got Eddie Miller. One year later, Miller went to the Braves for \$12,500 and Vince DiMaggio, Gil English, Johnny Riddle, Tommy Reis and Johnny Babich. Weiss thereafter sold Vince DiMaggio to the Reds for \$37,500, disposed of Riddle to the same club for \$7,500 and cut loose Babich and English for \$7,500 each.

Hassett came from Manhattan College as a first baseman in 1933, but the Yanks had the rugged Lou Gehrig, whom they had corralled for \$1,500, on the bag and he figured to be an immovable object for years to come. Hassett was



A Dodger rally is snuffed out by a double play in the third game. The slick pivot play of Martin, hero of the Yankees' victory, is another tribute to good coaching.

shipped to the Dodgers for a mere \$40,000. Weiss talked the Dodgers into including Johnny McCarthy and Ralph Boyle in the deal as, he said, he needed some first basemen over at Newark, where he was general manager. McCarthy, inside a year, went to the Giants for \$40,000. Boyle was traded for Jimmy Gleason, whom the Yanks sold to the Cubs for \$25,000. Then tie this—in 1942 the Braves corked up \$22,000 which they gave to the Yanks, along with Buddy Hassett himself, for Tommy Holmes.

Those were all good trades, but it was just last winter that Weiss pulled what many consider the greatest coup of his career. That was the trade that brought Harry Byrd, 1952's Rookie of the Year, and hard-hitting Eddie Robinson, tabbed the most sought-after first baseman in the league, and three other players to the Yankees in return for Vic Power, Renna, Bollweg and three young farmhands. Some of these farmhands are great prospects and there are those baseball men who say that in the long run the Athletics will get the better of the deal. But as of the moment there's little question but that the Yankees clinched their sixth straight pennant on the day that deal was closed.

The Yankees' astounding feat of winning five consecutive pennants and world series has won the team a lot of well-deserved credit, but not many people are aware of a strange feature of this streak—and it's a feature the Yankees are very proud of. As Red Patterson, the Yankee publicity director, put it, "In this time that we've won five straight pennants and world series, we've been rebuilding. Just look at the nineteen fifty-three team. There are only eight men left who went to training camp five years ago with Stengel's first Yankee team—Rizzuto, Bauer, Woodling, Reynolds, Lopat, Berra, Raschi and Silveira."

The fact that the Yankees could accomplish this should be answer enough to those who scream, "lucky" every fall. When you pull off a feat like that once, you might be open to the charge of lucky. But a five year streak is another story. Many people have tried to explain the Yankees' success in one way or another, but perhaps the best job was done by well-known sports writer Red Smith who said flatly, "They are the best team in baseball because they have the best baseball organization—a network of business administrators and scouts and farm directors who work harder at their jobs, and do them better, than anybody else in the games."

New York has perfect coaching balance—Dickey (catching), Turner (pitching), Crosetti (infield), Stengel (outfield).





WE SPEARED THE GIANT MANTA

Continued from page 13

lookout for sharks, my cautious friend."
"Sharks," he replied grimly, "do not always swim on the surface."

Now that the hunt had taken on a serious aspect, the Arab was less enthusiastic than ever about being alone in the youyou. The little craft was extremely fragile, nothing more than a mahogany shell. But Ben Couscous' lack of enthusiasm was no greater than my own, for in spite of the warm temperature of the water I was shivering badly.

We didn't wait long before several pairs of mantas now hove into sight. The doctor chose the biggest of the beasts—it measured at least 28 feet between the tips of its flippers. Hurriedly glancing over my shoulder, I saw Ben Couscous watching us. The nearness of the little youyou did not lend me a great deal of comfort—next to the devilfish the boat looked like a toy.

The Arab had the harpoon lines in his hands and as we swam forward, he played them out over the bow. If he let

the ropes take on too much slack, the doctor and I might get fouled in them. This would be fatal, as once hit the beast would sound and pull us under with him. Then there was the danger of the manta's flippers; a blow from one of them would be sufficient to break a man's neck or back.

By now Dr. Robert and I had come directly over the great devilfish. The beast was swimming majestically and unconcernedly through the water, its long whiplike tail acting as a rudder. Above it rode a little streamlined pilot fish, looking like the motor of a jet-plane.

Dr. Robert pulled the breathing tube from his mouth and whispered, "I'm going in for a shot at the bugger's belly."

"Why do you have to complicate things?" I pleaded. "Suppose the beast comes down on you?"

"That," replied the doctor, "is an Arab myth."

As he treaded water, his head sticking

above the surface, Dr. Robert looked like some strange creature that had risen from the bottom of the sea. His diving mask covered his eyes and nose, and all about it lay his coal-black beard, studded with tiny drops of sparkling water.

"You saw what happened the two other times, didn't you?" he said. "It is not enough to just get the harpoon into a spot where it'll hold; you've got to hit the beast in the vitals so that he is weakened."

"All right then, go ahead," I growled, shoving the breathing tube back into my mouth.

With the manta in no more than six feet of water, the doctor jack-knifed and went down. His blue footpalm reached skywards like the feet of a hell-diver. Drawing a deep breath of air into my lungs I followed him. The water was so clear and warm that it was as though we were floating through air.

Now just ahead of me, I could see the doctor streaking for the bottom. There was no more than four feet of space between the white belly of the great mammal and the sand. I thought the doctor had gone mad, exposing himself in such a manner. How did he know that once the beast was wounded it would not defend itself by grinding its attacker into the sand?

Dr. Robert was now moving faster, for an undersea hunter must utilize the air in his lungs to full advantage. There cannot be any hesitation for planning the attack once the diver has plunged. He has only 40 to 50 seconds to get below, maneuver into position, fire, then return to the surface.

When he was three feet from the giant ray's belly the doctor leveled his gun. But he didn't fire. As I followed him in closer, I felt a burning desire to make a break for topside. Each detail of the devilfish's underside seemed magnified—his great black mouth; his death-head sunken eyes; even the texture of the glaringly white skin on the beast's belly.

Not until the point of Dr. Robert's harpoon was practically touching the manta did he signal me. I heard the vibrations of the straps of his gun, felt my own weapon kick back hard as I pressed the trigger. My arrow cut a streak of bubbles through the water. It took the manta not two feet from its mouth. I had no time to see how Robert's arrow had gone in, for I was already cutting for the surface, standing well clear of the harpoon lines as I moved.

Topside the youyou lurched forward. At the same instant Ben Couscous hove the grapnel anchor over the side. Through the clear water I saw the great manta run for the open sea, the anchor plowing a furrow a hundred yards wide across the bottom.

Then one of the grapnels hooked a coral block. As the wounded beast came up short, I held my breath, waiting to see the harpoon lines part.

But they held fast and both Robert and I hurriedly clambered back aboard the youyou.

We had hardly gotten out of the water when the sharks hove into sight. They



CAVALIER

"One of the most beautiful collections I've ever seen!"

must have sensed that the beast was badly wounded. There were 11 of them, and they struck at the bleeding manta like a pack of starved wolves, ripping huge chunks of flesh out of its body. In an instant the water was boiling with churning bulletlike bodies as the killers began to enjoy themselves.

This macabre dance of death went on for more than a half hour, and when the sharks cleared out there was not a great

deal left of our manta—its skeleton and a few lacy threads of blood floating in the clear water like Portuguese men-of-war.

That was our last try for a manta in the waters of the Red Sea. The next two days we spent harpooning fish in the lagoons and hardby the coral reefs, where there was no danger of our being attacked by sharks. But shooting bonitos and caranx, after our experience with

the devilfish, was extremely boring, and eventually we packed our gear aboard Ben Couscous' boat and returned to Djeddah.

We arrived in time to catch the evening plane for Cairo, and as we flew over the Far-San Bank we once more saw the Isle of Abulul. From the air it looked like a great Red Sea devilfish, its head pointing south, its huge flippers lying east and west. ■



THE THIEF-TAKER

Continued from page 20

beside his first campfire and pictured his own dead face beside tonight's fire. Each night he had to have a stiff drink from the jug of cachaca he'd found at his victim's campsite—but not too stiff a drink, for the cachaca undoubtedly had been the undoing of the two mestizos making them unwary.

And each night when he finally did sleep, he had hideous nightmares of the thief-taker. For he still had the fear that the thief-taker was hot on his trail, maybe only one day behind, maybe still two or three, but relentlessly cutting down the distance each day. . . .

Late in the afternoon Brandon shot a marsh deer, and at nightfall he roasted a hindquarter. He'd been living chiefly on fruits and he wolfed the meat ravenously. Afterward, he sat sipping cachaca and smoking his fourth last cigarette in the mosquito-dispersing smoke of his small campfire. Finally, he stretched out and drifted off to sleep, feeling, for once, well-fed and relaxed.

Nevertheless, the nightmare began at once. He was sleeping and then suddenly, without opening his eyes, he saw the thief-taker several hundred yards away behind thick undergrowth, snaking toward him on his belly, with a knife in his teeth. Then, in a switch he was the thief-taker, approaching himself lying in his poncho. And, as he arrived, he slowly raised his rifle, aimed—and sent a bullet into his own head as he lay rigidly braced against it. It always took the bullet eons to travel from the gun to his body, and all that time he prayed it wouldn't miss. For he always realized he was dreaming. Yet he never could wake up until the bullet had struck and, with a violent jerk of his whole body, he was dead—and awake again, soaked with sweat.

Tonight, however, the bullet struck quickly, and he jackknifed in excruciating pain.

"Get up!"

A short, dark, wiry man was standing over him with a revolver, grinning sardonically. Brandon grabbed for his gun, but it was gone. And this time he wasn't dreaming!

Another kick ground into the pit of his stomach and he doubled up, writhing.

"On second thought, don't get up. You look so pretty, senhor, lying there!"

So he'd lost. He'd known all along that the thief-taker would get him, that he'd never see Rio again, with its casinos and women.

The stranger bent and helped himself to the cigarettes in Brandon's shirt pocket and lit one, with a flourish.

"You were so-o-o-o clever, senhor," he said, good-humoredly, flipping the burning match in Brandon's face. "And the Servino boys were so stupid. Had they hired me, instead of setting off like children, their wives would not now be widows. And you would not have had to travel so far through the jungle. It is really a pity!"

He shrugged and sat down a few yards away, wrapping his arms around his ankles but never taking his gloating eyes from Brandon's face.

"Are you . . . taking me back to the settlement?" Brandon gasped.

"That is a good question." The thief-taker smiled. "There are those in the settlement who would enjoy seeing the senhor again. Even now they plan his reception. But no, senhor, I will not take you back. You would not relish such a wearisome trip." He stood up, rubbing his revolver with his thumb. "Has the senhor any last words?" he asked, with elaborate politeness.

"Yes, I sure as hell have some last words! I think we can strike a bargain, my friend," Brandon said rapidly, playing only for time. "You have no personal interest in this, either way—correct?"

"To an extent, correct." The thief-taker looked pained. "I naturally take pride in my work." He grinned, nastily. "But, yes, for you, personally, I have no feelings whatsoever."

"So there is no reason, then, why you should not let me escape? Providing I can make it worth your while?"

"And just how can the senhor hope to make it worth my while?" There was amused contempt in the thief-taker's voice. "It would take considerable to compensate me, senhor if I let you go. I take great pleasure in shooting stray pigs."

Brandon licked his lips. Then he said,

"It so happens I am a diamond buyer."

A quick gleam of interest and avarice lit the thief-taker's cruel eyes.

"I have a fortune in diamonds, and if I go free half are yours!"

"Only half?" The thief-taker laughed, contemptuously. "The senhor is a fool! . . . Sit down!" he snarled. "Show me the diamonds!"

"The diamonds are where I hid them in a thicket three days' distance from here. I will guide you to them and—"

"You lie! I see the diamonds now, or you chatter no more!"

Brandon got out the pouch reluctantly, throwing away his last ace to buy another minute. If the guy would only come a little closer—

"I thought so, cur! Spill them out on the ground!"

The big, dull diamonds rattled onto the dirt. "All of them are yours," Brandon babbled. "All! And now you are rich. So let me go. But look, just look at these stones!"

The thief-taker chuckled. "You realize, of course, that I will shoot you now." He spat at Brandon's face. "I will have all the diamonds and the pleasure of killing you! But," he conceded, generously, "the senhor is no fool. He had no choice." He came nearer, walking lightly on his bare toes. "Allow me, senhor, to thank you for this delightful day!"

He was close enough now, and it was Brandon's only chance. Half-sobbing, he lunged forward.

The sun was setting as the thief-taker rode into the river settlement. He hitched his horse before the little bar, swaggered in and ordered cachaca. Mestizos swarmed about him, excitedly. A dignified, white-haired little man hurried up to the thief-taker and exclaimed, "Alas, senhor, the dog is not with you! Then did he escape?"

The thief-taker turned slowly, with dignity, and tossed off a few inches of his drink before replying.

"No, senhor, the dog did not escape. I have come to inform you that justice once more has been done and while I am doing that pleasant task, to collect the balance of my fee."

"Ah, wonderful! Wonderful!" The little man dabbed at his eyes with a big handkerchief.

"And, oh, yes," the thief-taker added, as if on afterthought, "I have brought you the usual receipt."

He tossed two shriveled objects casually onto a table.

They were, unmistakably, a pair of ears. ■



WHEN CONAN DOYLE PLAYED SHERLOCK HOLMES

Continued from page 9

Edalji have run through the dark, and in a pouring rain, when in daylight, he could not have seen more than six feet in front of him? Why, Sir Arthur wanted to know, had Edalji's lawyer not brought out the point about his bad eyesight?

Convinced of the young lawyer's innocence, Doyle took time out from writing his Sherlock Holmes stories to prove it. He talked to dozens of men who had known Edalji since childhood.

Next, Doyle went to the village where the crimes had been committed and set about trying to find the man who was guilty. One day, with that sixth sense that every good detective has, Doyle became interested in a hulking big man named Phillips who had worked on a cattle ship and in a slaughter house. Phillips lived not far from Edalji; it would have been necessary for him to have run toward Edalji's home to get to his own after the crime. One night Doyle sneaked into a barn on Phillips' property and found the type of implement thought to have been used in the crimes.

Probing further into Phillips' past, Doyle found that the man had an unsavory record in another part of England.

Next, Doyle got a sample of the man's handwriting on a postal card that Phillips had sent to a friend while on vacation. Phillips' handwriting was strikingly similar to that on the anonymous letter that any argument about its origin was out of the question.

Doyle next learned that Phillips had often made uncompromising remarks about Edalji in the town pub. One night Sir Arthur went into the pub for a glass of half-and-half when Phillips came in. Doyle had not, until this time, been able to get a close look at Phillips' shoes. The man had run-down heels and wore the same size shoe as the imprisoned lawyer.

Doyle was now certain that Phillips was the guilty one. But he could not sell the police on his findings. Like all small men they wouldn't admit their mistake.

Doyle's next step was an appeal to the British public. He wrote a series of stories in *The Daily Telegraph*, one of London's largest newspapers, setting forth his findings. The articles created such a clamor that Edalji was pardoned.

The year after he had obtained Edalji's release from prison Doyle received a letter from a man who was serving life on the quarries in Peterhead Prison for murder, asking that he come to see him and establish his innocence. The man was Oscar Slater, a slight, undernourished German of 30 who after having been given a last-minute reprieve from the gallows, was serving a life sentence of penal servitude for the murder of an 82-year-old spinster named Marion Gilchrist.

Sitting outside of Slater's cell for several nights Doyle made copious notes

and asked all manner of questions. The background of the case was this:

Marion Gilchrist was a wealthy recluse who occupied a first-floor flat on Queen's Terrace in Glasgow and had accumulated a modest nest-egg. Her prize possession was a box of jewels worth £3,000, the equivalent of \$15,000. She kept these in a box in her bedroom.

The afternoon of December 21st, 1908, was dark, raw and dreary. The pubs around the corner from Miss Gilchrist's flat on Queen's Terrace were doing a roistering business. Many a disreputable character, both natives of Glasgow and strangers from the trans-oceanic ships docked at the city, were abroad in the dank alleys and streets.

Two or three times a week a 20-year-old servant girl named Helen Lambie came to Miss Gilchrist's flat. On this particular December afternoon Lambie was still in the flat at 7 o'clock. She was about to leave for the day when Miss Gilchrist asked if she would go around the corner and fetch an evening paper.

When Lambie returned a few minutes later, she found her mistress lying in the dimly lit bedroom fatally bludgeoned. A man emerged from behind a curtain.

Lambie, who seems to have been not too bright, took a quick look at the man as he passed her in the gloom on his way out of the flat. He seemed to be short, dark, and about 30.

Lambie, terrified, said and did nothing. Nor did a tenant named Adams whom the murderer passed in the hall.

The police dragnet for the killer was wide and intensive. The motive for the murder was not apparent. Miss Gilchrist's flat was not disturbed. Her box of jewels had been opened but there was no way of telling whether she or the intruder had opened it. Nor was there an exact inventory of the jewels.

A few days after Christmas the police got their first rumble in a Glasgow pawn shop. Oscar Slater, a little German of uncertain means, had pawned a lady's brooch worth about £30, immediately after the murder. The police confiscated the brooch and showed it to Lambie who said she thought it came from the collection of her mistress.

But Slater had vanished. Under an assumed name and in company of a mistress, he had boarded a ship for the United States. Arriving in New York he was arrested and charged with the murder.

Slater protested. The brooch? He said he had owned that for many years and it had been in and out of Glasgow pawn shops for more than a decade.

Meantime, English police had been busy. Slater had lived on the fringe of the half-way world most of his adult life. The police dug up photos of the man and showed them to Lambie and to Adams, the man who had seen the mur-

derer in the hallway. Both of them, after some hesitation, identified Slater.

Next the police took Lambie and Adams to New York. There, at Police Headquarters, Slater was placed in the famed 9-o'clock line-up. Lambie and Adams identified him. Slater was returned to England to stand trial for murder. He was sentenced to the gallows.

He was within 24 hours of death when the first doubt of his guilt began to arise in high places and his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. Now Conan Doyle, after listening to Slater's recital in prison, did the same thing that he had done after listening to Edalji. He went out and began an investigation.

The first thing Doyle established was that Slater had, for many years, possessed a brooch similar to that which the police had found in the pawn shop. There was no way of telling whether both brooches were one and the same. On the other hand, there was no way of proving that they weren't.

Examining the scene of the crime, Doyle wondered why a man bent on robbery, once he had located Miss Gilchrist's box of jewels, would have confined himself to stealing only a brooch. This wasn't psychologically sound.

No, Doyle thought, the actual intruder must not have had time to locate the jewels before Lambie returned and prompted him to flee. Ergo, the very basis of the Crown's case—that the murderer had taken a brooch from Miss Gilchrist's jewel box—was psychologically unsound.

Questioning Lambie and the tenant in the murder house, Doyle elicited from them the fact that the killer had worn a gray coat and a dark cap. Doyle established the fact that the imprisoned man had not owned a gray coat or a dark cap.

Sir Arthur kept hammering away at the two eye-witnesses. Eventually they said that they could have been mistaken in their identification of Slater.

Doyle's next move was to establish the fact that Oscar Slater, long before the murder, had possessed the brooch that the Crown contended he had snatched from the slain woman's flat. And after showing the dogged persistence of Holmes himself, Doyle produced three witnesses who had seen Slater with such a brooch prior to the murder.

But when Doyle offered his evidence which clearly established Slater's innocence, a strange thing happened. The Crown would not listen. For the greater part of 20 years a persistent Doyle kept hammering away in print and on the platform on the fact that Slater was innocent. And then one day in July of 1928—19 years and seven months after the murder of Marion Gilchrist—Oscar Slater stood in a Glasgow courtroom and received a full and unconditional pardon.

Standing in the courtroom with Slater that day was a kindly, twinkling-eyed gentleman of 69. To him Slater turned after receiving his pardon. "Thank you," said Slater to the twinkling-eyed gentleman, "and God bless you." The real-life counterpart of Sherlock Holmes said nothing. He just smiled and walked from the courtroom. ■



ARE YOU A DRINKING OR A DRUNKEN DRIVER?

Continued from page 17

progressing distribution of the alcohol lowers the concentration in the blood—and in the brain. This overshooting is the explanation for the brief 'kick' from the cocktail before dinner. The same drink taken after a meal would have lost its kick because, with the slower absorption from the full stomach, overshooting would not occur."

Most of us also believe that habitual drinkers build up more tolerance for alcohol than novices. Scientists say that very little is known about such "tolerance."

Dr. Haggard, however, points out that alcohol is burned no more rapidly in the habitual drinker than in any other drinker, and it is absorbed no more slowly.

"It is true of course," he said, "that the larger the individual the lower the concentration in the blood for a given amount of alcohol, so that, all other factors being equal, the large man has a greater natural tolerance than the small one. Aside from such differences I think that tolerance is mainly psychological."

Two years after Indiana and Maine defined intoxication in terms of the percentage formula, New York adopted the definition. Since then 13 other States, Arizona, Idaho, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Washington and Wisconsin have also adopted it.

Having written these specifications into laws the 16 states provided themselves with a scientific measurement for the prosecution of drivers suspected of being under the influence of alcohol. At the same time, and this should not be overlooked, the innocent motorist was also supplied with a medico-legal instrument that enabled him to free himself of suspicion.

There are five scientific methods of determining the amount of alcohol in your system: spinal fluid, saliva, urine, blood, and breath-sampling machines. Of these, the blood test and breath-sampling machines are the most reliable.

If you are ever picked up for drunken driving, and you know you're innocent, insist on a blood test at your own expense, providing there are no reliable breath-sampling machines available. This is your right. It will go a long way toward helping your defense in court.

If you submit to a test by a police surgeon or a physician summoned by the police, make sure that your skin is not swabbed with alcohol before blood is drawn. There are other sterilizing agents. The breath-sampling machines, which are becoming more and more popular throughout the country, offer a quick and accurate way to "sniff out" a drunk. Dr. Greenberg explained how they work.

"Alcohol passes from the blood into the breath so rapidly that even in the short time of a single breath an equilibrium is established. In this equilibrium there is a constant relationship between the concentration of alcohol in the blood on the one hand, and in the breath on the other."

There are several different machines made to perform an analysis of this kind. One of these is called the Drunkometer and another the Intoximeter. Both of these are effectively and efficiently used by some police agencies, but neither is automatic.

A third, the Alcometer, is automatic as well as efficient and is in use in Hartford, Bridgeport, Manchester and West Hartford, Connecticut, Jacksonville, Florida, Chicago, Illinois, Wichita, Kansas, Los Alamos, New Mexico, Greenville, North Carolina, Circleville, Ohio, Toronto, Ontario, Portland, Oregon, Greenwood, South Carolina, Corpus Christi, Texas and Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. As this is written, Paris, France, has purchased two and New York City is considering buying 10.

Of the various scientific and non scientific tests, I found the Alcometer breath test the quickest and easiest. I was placed in front of a small, compact machine, that weighs above 45 pounds, a portable automatic laboratory.

"Had anything to drink?" the operator asked me.

"Just a beer or two." I lied. I hadn't taken a drink in 16 hours.

"We'll see," he said as he pressed a button. "But first the machine will clear itself."

We waited two minutes then he gave me a rubber tube attached to the Alcometer and told me to blow into the mouth piece. I did and 15 cc of my breath was caught in a valve and pumped into a vial containing iodine pentoxide which reacts with alcohol and liberates iodine, carbon dioxide and water. The freed iodine enters another vial containing starch solution turning it blueish. The more alcohol in the breath, the deeper the shade of blue. A photoelectric cell registers the depth of color activating the needle on the dial to show the concentration of alcohol in the blood.

Exactly four minutes later I had my report. Completely negative.

"You can fool me," the operator said, "but not this machine. Drivers suspected of drinking too much and who have tried to cover up by chewing gum, eating peppermint, and raw onions, find that doesn't work either."

Today the use of chemical tests to determine the alcoholic content of suspected drinking drivers is nation-wide. These scientific tests are used by enforcement agencies in all but four states.

In two-thirds of the states both the state agency and some cities utilize this evidence in court. During 1952, according to the National Safety Council, there was a 52 per cent increase in the number of cities over 10,000 which reported using the tests in 1951.

If you are a non-drinker, an occasional drinker, a moderate drinker, these figures should encourage you. They indicate that the hazard of being flim-flamed by "walk-the-chalk-line" and other phony tests, and of being falsely convicted by small town, greedy cops, is diminishing.

If you are a heavy drinker or if you're the type who takes that extra one for the road, the figures mean something to you too. Should the cops pin a legitimate DWI (under the influence) charge on you, no lawyer will be able to argue your way out of jail.

If you want to know how the cracking-down cops feel about this, Arthur M. Thurston, Superintendent of Indiana State Police says: "Today after years of pioneer work, court acceptance is almost universal in Indiana. Police officers are now considering these chemical tests as their best tool in combating driving under the influence cases."

Of more than 1,500 motorists who were suspected of driving while under the influence of alcohol in Kansas City last year, and given chemical tests, 342 were cleared by the tests. Of the 1,164 held for trial, 1,160 were convicted, a score of 99 per cent. Other cities using the machines are doing equally well.

Suppose you've taken one too many, know it and refuse to take a chemical test, hoping that a good lawyer will successfully defend you later in court? This has worked sometimes in the past, but the maneuver is becoming more difficult to pull.

In New York State, for example, a law which became effective July 1st, 1953, provides that a suspect motorist must submit to a test or automatically forfeit his driving license.

This brings up another question. Can you choose the type test if you must take one?

Mortimer M. Kassell, counsel to the Motor Vehicle Commission of New York State has come up with one answer: "It would be unreasonable to expect that any police agency would have to maintain facilities for giving all of the tests with the choice being one of the motorist. The law contemplates only one test and does not specify that the motorist can determine which of the tests is to be given."

What you should remember is that in states requiring chemical tests (and in many municipalities) there is also a provision in the law which allows you to have a physician of your own choosing administer a chemical test in addition to the one given by the police.

Personally you've got a better test. Make certain that the alcoholic content of your blood is not more than .05 per cent before driving or doing anything requiring an important decision and you can be positive that you're not really "drunk" or whatever else you're in the habit of calling it. ■



I HUNTED WITH AMERICA'S TOP OUTFITTER

Continued from page 29

moved on down the ridge without noise. Suddenly, I saw him—a flashing brown form, bounding down the side canyon. When he reached the bottom, he paused a moment, then climbed the opposite side at a slow trot. He was a fat, three-point bull.

I piled off, the .300 H & H Magnum coming from the saddle scabbard. There, at 80 yards, was an opportunity many sportsmen would give an eye-tooth for. But the blunt truth is, I turned him down. On a trophy hunt, why should I spoil Tex's record with a puny three-pointer? So that night I went in elk-less, but entirely happy. Next day, Don Willden guided me.

At dusk we stopped the sweating horses near Two Ocean Pass. At 10,000 feet all timber was below us. The hills were barren rocks with chilling glacial winds howling off them. But Don knew trophy bulls and where they were apt to be. Hobbling his horse, he crept to the basin rim and squatted with the binoculars. Soon he said quietly, "There he is. A bull that'll measure over fifty inches."

He pointed across the basin. Through the Magnum's scope I could just make out a tan form about a mile away. My blood pounded.

"Come on. It'll be a race against dark," he said.

To "rim" the great basin we had to back track out of sight, then skirt the treacherous combination of shale, sheer rock walls, frozen earth, and huge pockets of glacial ice piled in for centuries. How those horses ever made it across such footing where we could spit 100 feet straight down, I'll never know. But Don hurried and I kept up, hoping there'd be 10 minutes of light after we'd reached the great bull. Intermittently, he'd bugle, undisturbed—a wild scream of challenge, like a distant steam whistle.

With the big bull bulging no more than 500 yards away, and no more than five minutes of shooting light left, Don hauled up short. Our long route was blocked by the end of the glacier which dropped sheer away for several hundred feet. There was no way of getting across and there was no time left to re-route.

Don shrugged. "Darkness beat us by thirty minutes—to this one anyway."

The lure of that monstrous bull was still with Don next day. "Let's take a short hunt up behind camp for today, huh?" he suggested.

It was sundown by the time we'd scoured 10 miles of the south rim and were headed back down toward camp. Don was studying an opening below. He suddenly said, "There are your elk!"

Through the glasses I could make out two tawny forms grazing and moving slowly about in a tiny glade a half-mile below. Don nodded. Silently we guided

the horses off the "top" country, and tied them in thick timber a quarter-mile farther down. Then we stalked on foot.

Minutes later we came on the beasts—a cow was standing between two pines. "Back away slowly," Don breathed in my ear.

Afterward he told me that to back straight away from sight will often cause a cow elk to stand without bolting and scaring the band. Then the hunter can circle, come up on the others the same way, and so find the trophy he wants. The stunt almost worked. We'd circled 100 yards down the ridge, when a bull bugled in the timber 200 yards beyond.

While working around, we somehow revealed our presence. Twice he bugled in quick succession, then they all moved off, cracking brush. It was already too late for decent shooting.

"Hurry," Don whispered, circling wide to the east.

Minutes later, I again marveled at the skill of this fellow. He'd guessed those elk's intentions. As I glanced through a tiny opening, there stood one, at 200 yards. Hoping hard it was the bull, I slipped to a sitting position and eased up the scope. A big cow! But even as I watched, a bigger beast walked up from behind, turned, and stared at me.

A bull usually follows. Ten to one this was the bull; and the temptation to squeeze off a quick one, as the cross hairs settled on his shoulder, was terrific. He was bigger than the other beasts, more contrasted as to color, and I was certain I could see upraised antlers.

But in trophy hunting, you not only are dead sure; you do some quick estimating. "Get the glasses on him quick, Don!"

Before I whispered, the beast walked slowly into the timber, out of sight. For the second time, darkness jinxed me.

"Tex," I said that night, "I've a feeling I'm going to flunk out on you."

"Tell you what. You and Don stay in, and hunt a day or so longer," he said.

So next day the whole party left, except Don and me. Everyone helped get the long packstring of mules and horses under way, and it was noon before Don was free. Actually, there was little use going out at all. "Let's hit it bright and early tomorrow," Don suggested.

I agreed, but as the afternoon wore on, the nagging thought that I might not get that bull or another made me fidgety. The plain truth is, I felt jinxed. When there were only two hours of sunlight left, I couldn't take it any longer. "Don, maybe it's foolish," I said, "but let's take a short ride across the meadow to that thick patch of spruce."

Largely to humor me, Don saddled the horses and we were off.

Within the hour we got a bull to an-

swer the bamboo bugle. He was in the thick timber rimming the meadow to the west. But again, darkness was a grinning demon, threatening to spoil things. We got the horses within a quarter-mile of the bull, tied them, and approached in the dusk to within 200 yards of the beast. In such thick, brittle timber there was only one smart thing to do—wait for the bull (and he likely had cows with him)—to move on down and out into the meadow to graze. Any further movement on our part would surely be heard.

The delay, with full darkness coming fast, was maddening. Aggravatingly slow, the beasts cracked brush, edging by inches down to timber's edge and the open meadow to the right. Intermittently, the bull peeled out his challenge to other bulls.

Then, suddenly, something went wrong. They either smelled the horses or us. There was dead silence for a long moment, then the quick shuffle of elk running through grass to the left.

"Come on, quick!" Don ordered.

Disregarding noise now, we raced over "pig-pens" of blowdown and out into the open. As we reached the grass of the meadowland, we could see them—six cows running out across the flat, and a great lone bull, paused to look at us.

I could hear Don's heart sink. After all his skillful stalking, the prize was now more than 350 yards away—too far; and it was too dark for precision shooting.

Desperately I calculated the distance. My .300 H & H Magnum was sighted on the nose at 250 yards. A solid hold just above the spine...

"Don, if I can get prone..."

He pointed to a mound of sticks and mud. Running to it, I flopped down, like bellying over a huge basketball. As the safety clicked off, the gremlins really poured it on. The distance was too far. The bull already moved off after the cows. It was too dark. The rifle had jounced 100 miles in the saddle scabbard, and could be off. A dozen ifs.

Swallowing fears and air, I held the third breath and squeezed off. A beautiful miss! At the second on that distant, dancing form, Don called, "A hit!" But for three more shots, the great bull extended the distance, giving no indication of being touched. Thinking I must be going above, or not leading him enough, I held lower and farther ahead.

Bad luck will eventually run out—if you fight it every step of the way. At the last smash of the heavy rifle, the big bull folded like a limp sack of wheat. His hind feet were still buckled under him, his head placidly on his chest, when I reached him. Four of the six shots were in the vital spine-shoulder area. The last, breaking his great neck, had stopped him.

The real thrill came later when Don came up with the horses and studied the trophy. The camp record for 1953 was a big six point "royal." In fact, royal bulls in Tex's camp were commonplace. But my last-chance bull had 18 points. I'd broken the record with a "royal and five-tenths."

So far as I was concerned, Tex's record was still intact! ■

THE CASE OF THE SOBBING OWL

Continued from page 34

side of the border where he could arrest her.

"Run tell her a slaver wants to see her," Hicks ordered one of the posse.

The ruse worked. Patty galloped up to the farmhouse, swung from the saddle with the vigor of a young man, and stalked into the farm kitchen to find herself facing Hicks' pistol.

"Well, young man," she said to Hicks as she stared imperiously at the faces of the posse. "I'm glad you thought me worthy of a half-dozen jailers."

The posse took Patty to Magistrate John Gibbons in Seaford, Delaware. On the testimony of Cyrus James, she was indicted for murder. James also implicated the Johnsons.

Taken to Georgetown, she was placed in prison to await trial late in May. Very much to her own surprise, she decided to confess her crimes. According to her account, Lucretia Patricia Hanley Cannon had poisoned her husband, killed 11 men with her own hands and assisted in the slaying of a dozen more. There was no doubt about it; a number of skeletons were unearthed at indicated points.

And on the night of May 11, 1829, young Patricia Johnson awakened to a strange sound. She had heard it before—a curious throbbing call that came from the woods near the tavern.

"An owl," Aunt Betty had told her. But the child knew it was not an owl. No owl made a sound like that. And no owl could make Patricia's grandmother rise from bed at midnight and ride into the darkness on her fine black horse.

Presently Patricia heard Aunt Betty go downstairs. The latch of the tavern door clicked; Aunt Betty was talking to someone. The odor of lilacs rose from the tavern garden. Suddenly a terrible cry filled the house.

"What is it?" Jen cried. "Aunt Betty!"

Betty had collapsed at the foot of the stairs. She turned her lined, tired face toward the daughter and granddaughter of Lucretia Patricia Cannon.

"She is dead," she said. "She took poison and destroyed herself."

And truly, Patty Cannon was dead, although there is some disagreement as to whether she died before or after her trial. With her death, the power of her gang was broken. The accounts vary; some indicate that two members of the group were executed while a number of others were imprisoned. The records, obscure because of their great age, are understandably vague. A pamphlet, published in 1841, implies that the Johnson brothers were punished, but the nature of the punishment is not revealed. In any case, the reader may be certain that Patty Cannon was the wickedest woman ever to walk on American soil. Her black record has never been matched. ■

THE MAN WHO HANGED HIS SON

Incredible as it sounds, there was once a public official of such integrity that he put a noose around the neck of his own son rather than violate his oath of office. The man was Mayor James Lynch Fitzstephen of Galway, and the hanging took place over 400 years ago.

Besides being Mayor and Chief Magistrate of Galway, Fitzstephen was a prosperous merchant who traded with Spain. Returning from a voyage to Cadiz, he brought home as his guest the 19-year-old son of Spanish friends named Gomez.

Fitzstephen's son, Walter, did everything possible to make young Gomez feel at home in Ireland. Walter was tall, handsome and high-spirited and a great favorite in the town. He was invited to all the parties and dances going, and he always took Gomez with him. The two young men became fast friends and would have remained so if it hadn't been for Agnes.

Agnes was the beautiful daughter of a neighboring merchant and was Walter's sweetheart. The trouble started when Walter saw, or thought he saw, fond glances being exchanged between Agnes and Gomez. One night Walter caught Gomez leaving Agnes' home after midnight. It turned out later that the visit was perfectly innocent, but a quarrel ensued and Walter stabbed Gomez to death.

Walter was arrested and locked in the city jail which was adjacent to his own home. He readily admitted his guilt, and was soon brought to trial to face the Chief Magistrate of Galway—none other than his own father.

According to the records, Mayor Fitzstephen was "a man of unexampled firmness." He proceeded to prove it. He sentenced his son to death and remanded him to jail. On the night before the execution, Mayor Fitzstephen entered the death cell and kept vigil to see that his son, whom he adored, was not freed by friends before justice could be done.

During the long hours of that night, Walter asked his father if there were any hope. "No, my son," Fitzstephen replied. "If anyone but your father were the judge, I could weep for your plight and beg your mercy. But your life is forfeited to the laws of Galway. You must die."

The father's decision was not taken lightly by the town people. A storm of public sentiment arose in his son's behalf. To a man, the citizens of Galway demanded that the sentence be modified or commuted.

It was not only the common people who brought unrelenting pressure on Mayor Fitzstephen. The best elements of the town also called on him to relax his iron sense of duty and spare his son. The boy's mother pleaded with the Mayor, but his answer was



"The law is the law," the Mayor said.

always the same: "The law is the law, and must be obeyed."

When the day of execution dawned, a riotous mob surrounded the jail, demanding mercy for the boy and threatening the father. Walter was led from his cell, supported on one side by his father and on the other by a priest. The gallows was on the other side of town from the jail, and the soldiers refused to clear a way through the throng. They, too, were on Walter's side. It would have been easy for the Mayor to weaken at the last moment and allow his son to be torn free.

Instead, when he saw the way to the gallows blocked, he turned around and led his son into their home. A moment later, the furious crowd looked up to see father and son standing in an arched window overlooking the street. The rope that had bound the boy's hands was now around his neck. The father died the other end around an iron spar protruding from the wall. He embraced the boy and kissed him. Then he pushed his son through the window.

Defiantly, Mayor James Lynch Fitzstephen stood at the window, waiting. He fully expected the outraged mob to storm the house and kill him. He was ready for this, fortified by the approval of his own conscience and the knowledge that he had fulfilled his oath of office and his duty to God as he saw it. He waited—but surprisingly enough, nothing happened.

The mob remained motionless, awed, feeling itself in the presence of a superhuman force of righteousness. Slowly the shouting and the muttering died out, and the rabble melted silently away.

That was the last time Mayor James Lynch Fitzstephen was ever seen in public. He withdrew himself from society for the remainder of his days.—Richard Hanser



ALLEN DULLES—AMERICA'S MASTER SPY

Continued from page 25

By 1949, the plotters were ready to make their move. Dulles supposedly helped plan the details. The plot was bold but simple. Gyorgy Palffy, a pre-war Hungarian officer and one of the conspirators, was named head of the entire Hungarian Army. Rajk helped engineer the appointment. His job was to organize a Hungarian People's Army battalion equipped with all the heavy weapons allowed Hungary by the Allies. At the right time, his battalion was to take over all important government offices.

The date for the coup was set for early June, 1949, but the Hungarian Secret Police got wind of it and swooped down on Rajk and the other conspirators. The plot was killed. At the purge trials, Rajk, Szanyi, and the others gave detailed "confessions" of their collaboration with Allen Dulles.

Dulles, the Communists complain, has also been using every trick of modern psychological warfare in his campaign against the Kremlin. One morning, Hungarians reading their newspaper found a full-page insert that didn't read much like the rest of the official party organ. It was a fervent plea calling on the United Nations to deliver Hungary "from the boot of our Russian overlords."

One CIA plot to breed revolution behind the Iron Curtain is still going strong, the Communists say. We are supposedly right in the midst of a plan to overthrow the Hodza regime in Albania.

According to Albanian reports, dozens of Dulles' agents, armed and equipped with short-wave transmitters, have been smuggled into the country by land, sea, and air. With local anti-communist help, these "agents" are supposedly staging guerilla raids, sabotaging Red military projects and organizing a pro-western underground.

Dulles and the CIA have gotten feature billing at the biggest purge trials behind the Iron Curtain—Kochi Xoxe in Albania, Kostov in Bulgaria, Gomulka in Poland, and Slansky in Czechoslovakia.

At the Slansky trial, the Kremlin claimed that Dulles had plotted with the former Communist leader to overthrow the government. But when the plot looked doomed, the Reds say, our secret CIA headquarters in Frankfurt, West Germany, made arrangements with Slansky to smuggle him out of the country. The CIA had secretly delivered a letter to Slansky, outlining the escape route. Further messages were to be sent to him in code over Radio Free Europe. But Slansky never got out alive. The Secret Police arrested him before the CIA plan could be put into effect.

At Slansky's trial, the Communists also claim that Czech agents on the CIA payroll are recruited from refugee organizations throughout Western Europe and

financed by a secret \$75,000,000 fund for "Project X," controlled by Allen Dulles.

One million dollars of this CIA "revolution fund," the *Daily Worker* claims, was recently handed over to W.I.N., a group of Polish underground fighters ranking with the best behind the Iron Curtain.

Communist complaints like these fill the pages of Pravda and the satellite press. In fact, Allen Dulles' name is probably better known behind the Iron Curtain than here in America.

Dulles came to the CIA with a list of espionage credits that makes the Communist claims about him sound tame.

Born in 1893, he was one of five children of a Presbyterian minister, Rev. Allen Macy Dulles. His grandfather, John Watson Foster, was Secretary of State under Benjamin Harrison and his uncle, Robert Lansing, was to become Secretary of State under Wilson.

By the time he was 23, Dulles had an M.A. from Princeton and one year's teaching experience in Allahabad Christian College in India under his belt. Then in 1916 he joined the State Department's Foreign Service and was assigned to Vienna, the seat of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. When America entered the war against Austria in 1917, Dulles was quickly whisked out of enemy territory and sent to neutral Switzerland. It was there that he first wet his toes in the queasy business of "intelligence."

Dulles' appetite for secret intelligence work was whetted. But it wasn't until World War II and the OSS, after spending 15 of the 20 intervening years as a Wall Street lawyer, that he developed his masterful talent for espionage.

Soon after Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt formed the OSS, an undercover agency that was to handle jobs we couldn't assign to either Army or Navy G-2. Brigadier General "Wild Bill" Donovan was named to head the new organization. He grabbed Allen Dulles out of law practice and made him one of his top assistants.

Dulles was first sent to Bolivia where he kicked the Nazis out of the airlines business. Then in November 1942, he was dispatched to Switzerland, nominally as the Special Assistant to the U. S. Minister at Berne, but actually as European Chief of the OSS.

Dulles began operations on the *Herengasse*, a street in Berne, with only vague instructions from Washington. But before long he turned his OSS Bureau into a center for all kinds of political refugees from Hitler.

Dulles soon got his first important assignment. He was to contact the anti-Nazi underground in Germany. He made discreet inquiries among German refugees. One of the clues led to the German un-

derground leader in Switzerland—but strangely enough his address was that of the German Consul General's office in Zürich. The contact man was Hans Bernd Gisevius, German Vice-Consul and actually a member of the *Abwehr*, the secret Nazi intelligence organization.

Gisevius, who hated Hitler, had been assigned to Switzerland by General Oster, the deputy leader of the *Abwehr*. Oster was one of the heads of the anti-Nazi conspiracy in Germany. Gisevius was to contact Dulles and through him seek American help in a plot to kill Hitler.

The plot was no idle dream. The underground leaders, Gisevius told Dulles, included Colonel General Ludwig Beck, former Chief of Staff of the *Wehrmacht*, Admiral Canaris and General Oster of the *Abwehr*, General Halder, Count Hellendorf, Chief of the Berlin Police, and dozens of high-ranking officers of the *Wehrmacht*.

Gisevius asked Dulles' help. Could he get a promise from Washington that they would welcome a new anti-Nazi government should their Hitler coup succeed?

Dulles sent a number of coded telegrams to Washington stressing the urgency of the plot. Then one day in February, 1943, Gisevius made contact and suggested another meeting.

"We have to stop seeing each other immediately," he told Dulles. "The Nazis have broken your code."

To prove his point, Gisevius reached into his pocket and from a small notebook he read a digest of several messages Dulles had recently sent to Washington. He had seen the decoded telegrams in the Berlin office of the *Abwehr*.

Dulles listened, then assured Gisevius that "Breakers"—as he called the anti-Hitler plot—was still intact. He had used another code to transmit the secret information about the conspiracy.

In April, 1944, in the hope of arousing Washington's enthusiasm for the plot against Hitler, Dulles wired a summary of the conspirators' position. But Washington made no promises to "Breakers." For weeks the Germans broke off relations with Dulles after hearing the discouraging news from Washington. But then on July 12, 1944, Gisevius was ordered to Berlin. The conspiracy was going ahead without Washington. The date of the coup had been set for July 20th. Hitler was to be assassinated in his East Prussian headquarters by one of his trusted aides, Colonel Count Claus von Stauffenberg, the one-armed Chief of Staff of the Germany Replacement Army.

Dulles learned the news from Gisevius. He wired Washington the details. The plot was amazingly simple. Colonel Stauffenberg was to report to Hitler's secret headquarters on July 20th. But instead of staff plans, his briefcase would hold a new British-designed bomb to be detonated by acid eating through a release wire. Stauffenberg was to place the loaded briefcase near Hitler at the conference table, and then leave the room on some pretext. The second the bomb exploded, General Erich Fellgiebel, Chief of the German Army Signal Corps, was to call the plotters at *Wehrmacht* Head-

quarters in Berlin, then destroy all means of communication from Hitler's headquarters.

As soon as Hitler was dead, Field Marshal Erwin von Witzleben was to assume control of all German land, sea and air forces. The Replacement Army was to restore order throughout the country. General Kurtzfeldt, Nazi Commanding General of the Berlin Area was to be arrested and replaced by General von Thungen. Lieutenant General Paul von Hase, Commander of Berlin itself, was one of the plotters. Count Wolf von Helldorf, Police Chief of Berlin, was to hold his men ready until the Replacement Army arrived to arrest the chief Nazis and disarm the SS troops.

The conspirators' ace-in-the-hole was to be the age-old blind obedience of the Prussian officer. Sealed orders under the code name "Walkure," had already been sent out to every German command in Europe by the conspirators in Army Headquarters. At the signal that Hitler was dead, orders to open them would follow. The "Walkure" envelope contained detailed instructions of the location of secret Gestapo headquarters and orders that martial law was to be enforced and all Nazis arrested. The plotters had guessed correctly in that no one had opened the "Walkure" envelopes in advance to tip their hand.

Those generals who were irrevocably bound to the plot—Field Marshal Rommel; General Count Heinrich von Stulpnagel, Military Governor of France; General von Falkenhausen, Military Governor of Belgium; and Field Marshal von Kluge, Commander in Chief of the Western front—were to arrest all SS and Gestapo leaders and make preparations to surrender to the Allies.

General Beck was to speak over the official radio station, *Deutschland Sender*, and announce that he was Chief of State. There would be a three day state of emergency, during which the Nazis would be eliminated and a new government formed. The new cabinet would immediately enter into armistice negotiations with the Allies.

In Berne, Dulles anxiously waited for news of Hitler's death. Washington had refused to take the plot seriously. But the OSS Chief knew that if Stauffenberg's bomb were well placed, there would be no need to defeat the Germans in battle.

The night of July 20th, the news hit Switzerland. The plot had failed. Hitler had spoken on the radio.

"An extremely small clique of ambitious, unscrupulous and at the same time foolish, criminally stupid officers hatched a plot to remove me and, together with me, virtually to exterminate the staff of the German High Command," Hitler said. "The bomb that was placed by Colonel Count von Stauffenberg exploded seven feet away from me on my right side. It wounded very seriously a number of my dear collaborators. One of them died. I, personally, am entirely unhurt, apart from negligible grazes, bruises, and burns."

Hitler was not telling the truth. Stauffenberg had placed the bomb just



The double-duty couch: a divan by day, and at night, a comfortable guest bed.

YOU CAN BUILD THIS CONVERTIBLE COUCH

If you have space problems in your vacation cottage or in your home, here's an easy-to-build couch, both practical and attractive. In the daytime it serves as a divan; and at night it can be opened up and turned into a comfortable bed.

The dimensions given in the drawings are for the original shown in the photograph above. This is an extra-long unit made to utilize all of the space in one corner of the room.

If you have less room, you can, of course, alter the dimensions to suit whatever space you have available. This particular couch has a sponge rubber mattress. If you prefer a box spring or

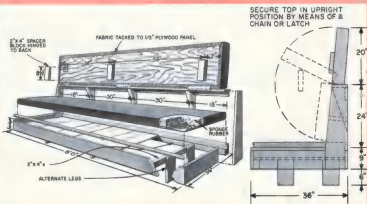
some other arrangement, again, you can alter the dimensions.

The backrest can be padded with either sponge rubber or with cushions, and along with the mattress can be covered with Leatherette or fabric.

You should use 2x4s to make the frame, and standard shelving material for the remainder of the couch.

The 2x4 spacer blocks should be hinged to the back section so they will serve as supports against the wall when the back is lowered into place.

The finished couch can be painted, stained or given a natural finish, depending on the color scheme of the room.—Hi Sibley



a few feet from him, but it had been moved by a general whose foot kept striking the briefcase. It ended in front of a thick wooden table leg which acted as a shield. The bomb exploded as planned. Hitler was partially paralyzed on his right side, and four Nazis were killed instantly. But Stauffenberg, who had left the room, thought Hitler was dead. He had one of the plotters call *Wilhelmstrasse*.

Thinking Hitler was dead, the plotters launched the coup. But the Replacement Army was turned back from Berlin by orders countermanding those of the conspirators. Major Remer, head of the battalion sent to arrest Goebbels, was instead put directly on the phone to Hitler in East Prussia. "I'm alive!" Hitler shouted into the phone. He gave the major authority to clean up the revolt. "Shoot as many people as you like," he screamed.

The night of the 20th, the Nazis took their vengeance. Under Scorzenny, the ruthless SS hatchet man, the round-up went on all through the night and into the next morning. Dulles feared for Gisevius, who was in Berlin at the War Ministry during the thick of the ill-fated plan.

Dulles gambled that Gisevius had survived the *Gestapo* terror of the 20th and 21st and was hiding somewhere in Germany. He circulated a rumor that Gisevius had made his way back to Switzerland. The *Gestapo* swallowed it and combed that country up and down. But of course, they never found Gisevius.

In August, Gisevius smuggled out word to Dulles with the address of his hiding place in Berlin. He was one of the few who had escaped capture and execution. Dulles was overjoyed. He was determined to rescue his friend.

His plan was daring, but if it could be pulled off, it would cut the vaunted *Gestapo* down to size. "Himmiller's secret police and intelligence service," Dulles maintained, "are reckless and cruel, but they are neither very skilled nor really subtle." Here was a chance to prove it.

What was the best way of eluding the *Gestapo*? Why not, Dulles decided, make Gisevius one of them? Gisevius knew *Gestapo* mannerisms and techniques. With the right set of papers he might make it to Switzerland.

Dulles' plan took shape. Gisevius was to become "Dr. Hoffmann," a high-ranking functionary of the *Gestapo* on a special mission to Switzerland. They would need one of the thick metal badges carried by important *Gestapo* officials, and a special *Gestapo* passport with Gisevius' own picture. As an added touch, Dulles decided they would forge a letter from the main *Gestapo* Headquarters instructing all officials of the Nazi Party to assist "Dr. Hoffmann."

Fortunately, the *Gestapo* had not uncovered every anti-Nazi conspirator. Dulles made contact with one of Gisevius' friends in the German Embassy in Bern who supplied him with copies of various *Gestapo* passports and official documents. But Dulles had no picture of Gisevius. As it turned out, neither did the *Gestapo*. Gisevius had skillfully removed all his photographs from all Nazi files.

After a while though, the *Gestapo* found a recent full-length snapshot of Gisevius, but almost as soon as they found it, it somehow disappeared from their files and ended up in Dulles' office.

The material to be copied had finally been assembled. Immediately it was flown to the London OSS office where skilled printers worked furiously to forge the escape documents and *Gestapo* badge. By October, the papers were ready.

All Dulles needed was a courier to take it through hundreds of miles of Nazi territory into Berlin. Again, Dulles thought, we'll use one of them.

Dulles spread the word through some German contacts. An old anti-Nazi friend of Gisevius, Henry Goverts, a Hamburg publisher and liaison officer for the *Abwehr*, volunteered for the job. He was to meet an OSS messenger at Constance on the German-Swiss border where he would pick up the forged *Gestapo* papers.

Twice, he came to Constance and missed the OSS messenger. But finally, on the third try, the dangerous papers were transferred to Goverts.

A few days later, the door bell rang in Gisevius' flat. But when he answered, he saw no one. A blacked-out car was just pulling away from the curb. Then he noticed a bulky package had been put in his mailbox. It was Allen Dulles' package from Switzerland—his *Gestapo* badge, passport, and official letter.

On January 23, 1945, at 6 a.m., a disheveled giant of a man wearing a light spring coat, torn and badly in need of a pressing, stood at the customs gate at Kreuzlingen on the German-Swiss border. The guard and the customs official stared at this strange "Dr. Hoffmann" who was on a secret mission for the *Gestapo*. His appearance didn't inspire confidence. Gisevius' body froze with fear as his papers were inspected. He tried to keep the outward calm of a self-assured SS chief. "Ach, these mad *Gestapo* bigshots wear the strangest costumes," the petty official muttered. They opened the gate. "Dr. Hoffmann" gave the Nazi salute and passed into free Switzerland.

Dulles' coup in rescuing Gisevius, who incidentally now lives in America, earned him the applause of intelligence agents throughout Europe. But it was just one of the many brilliant jobs he engineered from Switzerland.

During the summer of 1943, bits of information about "strange structures" the Nazis were building on the Baltic coast near Peenemünde started filtering into his office. Dulles followed up the leads, and when he was sure something important was going on, he asked the Air Force to make a photo reconnaissance flight. The developed pictures showed the "strange structures" to be launching sites for the new V-rocket. Peenemünde was the hidden research center for the program.

Armed with Dulles' intelligence, a heavy air strike was called on Peenemünde. The rocket sites were damaged and the program that almost won the war for Hitler was set back six months.

The OSS usually had to work hard for whatever intelligence it bought or stole.

But one day the best source of information America had during World War II just walked into Dulles' office.

It was August 23, 1943. Dulles was working in his upstairs office in the American Legation annex in Bern when one of his lieutenants walked in. There was a Dr. O., a tall Prussian-like German with crew-cut grey hair downstairs, and he wanted to see Mr. Dulles. "And here," the lieutenant said as he placed three documents before Dulles. "He brought these with him."

Dulles studied the papers. They were headed "Geheime Reich Sache"—Secret State Document. They were all addressed to Joachim von Ribbentrop, Foreign Minister of Germany. Each of them was from a different German ambassador.

Dr. O. told him the rest of the incredible tale. "These are not the only papers," the Doctor said. "I am merely an intermediary. The man who brought them is here now in Bern as a special courier to the German Embassy. Actually, though, he is a trusted employee at the *Auswärtiges Amt*—the Foreign Ministry. He has much more important information, but he wants to meet Mr. Dulles personally."

This is preposterous, Dulles said to himself. Intelligence work wasn't that easy. Perhaps, Dulles thought, this is a trap—a German plan to break our code by intercepting the message as it is sent to Washington. Or perhaps Dr. O. was a member of the Swiss Police. Espionage was illegal in Switzerland, and this could be a trap. It was a gamble, Dulles thought, but one that had to be taken.

An appointment was made to meet at Dulles' assistant's apartment in the *Kirchfeld* district at midnight. There was little time lost on formality. The courier took a large brown envelope out of his pocket. The flap was open. On it was a swastika seal in dark red wax.

"I think you will find exactly 186 items of important information in the envelope," he spoke in German. "This is the additional material Doctor O. spoke of. It is not all. I am prepared to bring more information whenever possible."

Dulles and his assistant stared at the courier, incredulous.

"I have no doubt you are wondering about my authenticity. I anticipated that. You see, all these papers have come across my desk in the Foreign Ministry where I am the assistant to Herr Ritter. My job is to sift the paper work and bring only the important matters to his attention."

Dulles studied a few of the secret Ribbentrop papers. There was a revealing report on German troop morale on the western front, a detailed inventory of sabotage done by the French underground, a memo of the conversation between Ribbentrop and the Japanese Ambassador. Dulles was sure he had struck a gold mine.

Dr. O. told Dulles how he had first approached the British. The British were interested, but when he told them the courier wanted no money, they laughed. They asked if it was a joke. If so, it was not a very funny one.

But the man from the *Auswaertiges Amt* was accepted by Dulles and given the code name of "George Wood." Thus was born, as General Eisenhower later said, one of the Allies' most valuable informants.

During the next two years, "Wood" made five trips from Berlin to Berne, often at the risk of his life. In all, he delivered to Dulles 2,600 documents.

Through "Wood," Dulles learned of the secret radio in the German Embassy in Dublin that was directing Nazi U-boats; of the Laval plan for the arrest and possible execution of relatives of soldiers who joined General deGaulle. It was "Wood" who discovered the identity of Cicero Diellio, the Nazi spy who was a butler in the home of the British Ambassador to Turkey—and later became the subject of the film *Five Fingers*.

One of "Wood's" most important bits of information was a message from the German Embassy in Buenos Aires. It reported the impending departure of a large American convoy from an Atlantic port. But as soon as Washington received the news from Dulles, the shipping date was changed. A number of U-boats were highly disappointed.

Dulles' cables to Washington became highly-awaited events. The German courier received no money, or medals for his heroic work. All he had was Dulles' assurances that the free world would never forget his contribution.

By February, 1945, the Allies had recaptured most of Western Europe and were pushing their way into Germany. Dulles had done an ingenious job of intelligence, and his work seemed behind him. But one day he received a visit from Major Max Weibel, Intelligence Officer of the Swiss General Staff.

He had come on behalf of SS General Karl Wolff, *Gestapo*-Chief of all Italy.

Wolff's proposition, as relayed by Weibel, was startling. Both he and Field Marshal Kesselring, as Commanders of the SS and *Wefhrmacht* armies in Italy, were willing to negotiate with the Allies to surrender 600,000 German troops then in Northern Italy. The surrender had nothing to do with Hitler and would be accomplished without his blessings.

Wolff wanted to arrange a meeting with Dulles in Switzerland to discuss the surrender.

Dulles' first reaction to the fantastic offer was one of skepticism. He told Major Weibel he would think about it, but could do nothing at the present time. But as the days went by and the Allies pushed forward, Dulles reconsidered. He had read OSS reports on the increasing defeatist attitude among the German officer ranks. Kesselring's reported agreement to Wolff's plan made it sound more authentic. Dulles decided it was too good an opportunity to pass up. He contacted Weibel and said he would agree to meet with one of General Wolff's personal representatives.

Late in February of 1945 General Wolff sent an SS officer, Dollman, to see Dulles; and the SS decided to have an assistant handle this stage of the talks.



THE OFFICER WORE DIAPERS

There's a chance that Samuel Barron may have hitched up his diapers and flashed a proud smile as his famous uncle, James Barron, cooed into his ear, "You are now a midshipman."

That is, if he knew what "midshipman" meant. For Samuel Barron was just a frail three-year-four-month-old kid when he was advised of his United States midshipman rank. Ever since that date, April 11, 1812, Samuel Barron has kept his name in the naval record books as the U. S. Navy's youngest officer.

Among the outstanding beginners young Samuel bettered in this age-or-lack-of-it-contest were David G. Farragut, hero of Mobile Bay and "Damn the torpedoes" fame who entered service at 9½ years, Duncan N. Ingraham, who risked war with Austria by rescuing an American citizen from an Austrian brig and who had more courage at the age of nine when he entered the Navy than many men have at 50. The closest competitor to Samuel's title of youngest naval officer in American history was Louis M. Goldsborough, who hooked up with the Navy at the ripe old age of seven years 10 months.

Although he threw considerable weight around his uncle's home, little Samuel Barron had nothing to do with his acquisition of a midshipman rank along with half pay and allowances. It seems that the Barron family was always represented in the U. S. Navy. The procession of naval Barrons got a severe jolt when the famed James Barron was suspended because of his part in the Chesapeake-Leopard affair in which the British frigate Leopard made a surprise attack on Uncle James' frigate, the Chesapeake.

The strict court-martial suspended the veteran James Barron for five years. Baby Samuel Barron had been born on November 28, 1808, and was only two years old when his father died from "Asiatic fever." He was then adopted by James.

With the stigma of suspension hanging over the Barron family head, someone still unknown to history got a brilliant idea and wangled a midshipman's warrant for young Samuel. Some fast maneuvering brought baby Samuel his rank and his first pay check when he was barely able to stand. But even as a midshipman he probably fared worse than many kids today. He was able to receive half of the regular midshipman's pay of \$19 a month plus two rations. No doubt also pleasing to the young Samuel was the fact that a few cents were put away for him in place of the grog that was given to sailors in those days.

At the grizzly age of eight he was ordered to report to the Norfolk Navy Yard. Some strict training followed and then in 1820 the youngster was ordered aboard his first ship, the U.S.S. Columbus.

By the time Samuel had reached 14 years of age, he was busily engaged in fighting pirates and knew ship life backwards. He even was aboard a ship which escorted Lafayette back to France.

After 15 years' service as a midshipman, Samuel was rewarded with a lieutenant rank. The now able officer took over the command of several warships.

By 1861 the remarks about "the officer in diapers" had completely disappeared. In that year Samuel was made a captain. Then shortly after that he resigned from the U. S. Navy to take command of the Virginia Navy. He was captured by the Union forces but later was paroled and exchanged on the prisoner list. Back with the Confederate naval forces he closed his career as a flag officer in Europe. When the war ended, he retired to Virginia.

Samuel Barron, the "diaper midshipman," died at the ripe old age of 79 years. It is very doubtful that his record as the U. S. Navy's youngest officer will ever be duplicated.—Henry F. Unger

The Nazi Storm Trooper and the American OSS agent met in a private room at the Restaurant Bianchi in Lugano, Switzerland.

"As a sign of his good faith," Dollman said, "General Wolff is prepared to free two of our most important Italian partisan prisoners, Professor Ferruccio Parri, the partisan chief in Northern Italy and Major Usniani, one of your collaborators."

The two men worked out the details for a meeting between Dulles and General Wolff. The date was set for March 8, 1945.

"Both Kesselring and I wish to quit this useless war so that we can avoid further bloodshed and destruction in Italy," the Nazi General told Dulles. "Hitler has ordered a scorched earth destruction of Northern Italy when we retreat. I wish to avoid this at all cost. I am therefore prepared to discuss surrender of our armies in Italy."

To show his sincerity, Wolff swore that he would deliver several hundred Jewish prisoners as soon as the surrender was signed. He would be personally responsible for the 350 American and British POW's under his control. He also guaranteed that the important ports of Genoa and Trieste would be delivered intact.

Dulles listened carefully to Wolff's proposal. He felt certain that he was telling the truth. At this late date, the *Gestapo* had nothing to gain by such tactics. It was obviously a legitimate bid to surrender. If it could be worked out, it would save thousands of American lives.

Wolff departed with Dulles' promise to contact Allied HQ at Caserta to arrange another meeting.

On March 15th, things started moving quickly in "Operation Sunrise Crossword," as Dulles had dubbed it. Two "sergeants" from Allied headquarters, Nicholson and McNeely, arrived in Bern that day. They went directly to Dulles on the *Herengasse*. For six days, the two men lived there behind drawn shades, the reason for the security was obvious. The two "sergeants" were really U. S. Major General Lyman L. Lennitzer, Assistant Chief of Staff at Caserta, and British Major General Terence S. Airey, the Combined Command's Intelligence Chief. They were to meet with Dulles and Wolff on March 19th to arrange the surrender.

On the 19th, the German and American delegation met near Locarno in two villas borrowed for the occasion. The American villa had a secret radio that kept Dulles in constant touch with our headquarters.

The meeting went off fine so far as details were concerned. But a major hitch had come up since the last meeting. Kesselring had been transferred from Italy and replaced by Colonel General Heinrich von Vietinghoff, who was not yet sold on unconditional surrender. Nothing could be done until Vietinghoff agreed.

Meanwhile our Army's advance was cutting the line of communication be-

tween Dulles and Wolff. Before the meeting broke up, Dulles suggested a daring plan. Why not send one of his own radio operators along with Wolff? He could then radio Dulles in a secret American code. Little Wally, a Czech refugee, got the perilous job and he was installed behind the enemy lines in SS Lieutenant Zimmer's Milan apartment overlooking Mussolini's secret hideout.

Dulles and Wolff kept in constant touch, but Vietinghoff had not yet changed his mind. To help persuade him, Nazi General Wolff asked Little Wally to radio Allied Headquarters and ask for a slight "touch-up" bombing raid on Vietinghoff's headquarters. Wally was also kept busy directing Allied aircraft to likely targets in the area.

Nothing much happened for almost a month. Then on April 21, Allied Headquarters abruptly told Dulles to cut off his talks with the Germans. Dulles wasn't told, but Stalin had become distrustful of our OSS chief. Stalin had written both Churchill and Roosevelt spouting fire because he was sure Dulles was negotiating a separate peace with Germany. President Roosevelt assured Stalin that the plan was purely a military surrender. A Soviet representative would be invited should anything concrete develop.

Finally, on April 24, 1945, Little Wally sent news that Vietinghoff had agreed. Wolff and his aides met Dulles in Switzerland. They waited for news from Allied HQ in Caserta. By April 27, the Russian fears had obviously been soothed for headquarters gave permission for the surrender. Wolff's two representatives were flown to Caserta where the documents were signed on April 29th. A few days later, on May 2, 1945—five days before Germany capitulated—the 600,000 Nazi soldiers in Italy laid down their guns.

Without so much as firing a single shot, Allen Dulles had delivered a German Army.

When the war ended, Dulles moved to Germany as head of our OSS mission there, then went back into private law practice for a few years. But in January, 1951, he answered a call from the CIA. By August of that same year he was named the Agency's Deputy Director. In February, 1959, he was placed in charge of the entire organization.

When President Truman set up the CIA in 1947, it was according to the recommendations of a three man committee, one of whom was Allen Welsh Dulles. The organization was put in charge of all undercover work previously handled by Army, Navy, and Air Force G-2 sections.

Whenever called to, the CIA makes its important "crash reports" to the President and the National Security Council. These National Estimates contain not only information secured by espionage, but a round-up of intelligence obtained by analysis of foreign newspapers, magazines, and radio broadcasts.

Once a week, the day before the National Security Council meeting at the White House, Dulles meets with the Intelligence Chiefs of the FBI, State De-

partment, Atomic Energy Commission, and the Armed Services, to be sure all information available has been properly coordinated for the President. The following day Dulles makes his weekly report at the National Security Council meeting.

Assisting Allen Dulles in running the CIA is Lieutenant General Charles Pierre Cabell, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence and former Director of Intelligence for the Air Force. Robert Amory, Jr., a 38-year-old former Professor of Law at Harvard, is in charge of the vital Intelligence Division.

The CIA has a reputation for employing more super-civil servants (\$12,000-\$14,000) than any other bureau in Washington. The Agency's hush-hush policy keeps the public from learning much about its work. But occasionally something happens that brings the CIA to our attention.

Not long ago, for example, CIA agents in Germany saved America a great deal of embarrassment. A Soviet Guards Officer, Red Army Lieut. Colonel J. D. Tassoyev, crossed the Iron Curtain and approached American agents, saying he wanted to desert the Russian Army. He loved democracy, and had lots of secrets to tell. He was a real find for an intelligence agent, but something smelled wrong to the sensitive nose of the CIA. The orders were "Hands off."

The British, however, were more gullible. They flew Tassoyev to London in Montgomery's personal plane and set him up in a fancy West Kensington flat complete with blond female agent Betty Wiggins. But instead of talking, the Red Army "deserter" asked questions. What was the route other deserters had taken? How did Allied Intelligence learn so much about Russia? The Tommies soon learned that they had been taken. The not-so-clever MVD Colonel was promptly flown back behind the Curtain.

Another time, the CIA showed a curious American general the extent of the Agency's knowledge. A high-ranking Air Force official asked how much help the Agency could give him in determining bomb targets in a certain "Country X," a potential enemy. In five minutes, CIA officials produced complete dossiers of every significant target in the nation, several thousand in all. The general was deeply impressed.

Actually, things haven't changed too much since Dulles' eventful years on the *Herengasse*. Today, Dulles' office is at 2450 E. Street, Washington, instead of Bern, Switzerland. The aggressor is the Soviet Union instead of Nazi Germany. But the work of masterminding an intricate espionage and intelligence network for the United States is old hat to the master spy with the innocent air.

Should we ever doubt it, we have only to listen to the cackling criticism of Dulles offered by Ilya Ehrenburg, the Kremlin's best propagandist:

"Even if the spy Allen Dulles should arrive in heaven through somebody's absent-mindedness, he would begin to blow up the clouds, mine the stars, and slaughter the angels." ■

BEST-SELLING NOVEL IN THIS ISSUE



The Snatchers

CHAPTER ONE

BY LIONEL WHITE

Slowly turning from the narrow, dirt-encrusted window that faced the sandy road leading over the dunes and down to the main highway, the girl had a worried, petulant look about her mouth. Oddly enough, it seemed to emphasize the peculiarly harsh beauty of her Slavic face.

"They're late," she said.

Dent flicked a glance at his watch and went on oiling the .38 police positive. His wide, flat shoulders hunched in a shrug.

"They should be here by now," the girl said.

She turned back once more, pulled the stringy curtain to one side, and peered again through the mist across the dunes.

The man Dent laid the revolver on the oilcloth-covered table.

Reprinted from the World's Greatest Novel THE SNATCHERS. Copyright 1933 by Pancaut Publications, Inc.

"Get away from the window, Pearl," he said, his voice a soft drawl, but still with that peculiar tight hardness which always seemed to lend to his words the shadow of a subtle threat. "Stop worrying. They're not too late. A lot of things could have happened. Puncture—anything. And I told Red to drive slow. They'll be here, so stop worrying. You get some coffee going."

"I'd like a drink," Pearl said.

"You'd like a slap in the kisser," Dent said. "You're not going to take a drink. I told you before, you can't drink on this job. Nobody's going to drink. After they get here, and we get things settled down, then you can have a drink. Not until."

The girl turned toward Dent and this time her husky voice had a note of pleading in it. "Aw, Dent," she said. "You know I'm no lush. You know you don't have to worry about me."

"I know," Dent said. "I also know Red don't like you to drink when he's not around. Not that I give a damn for Red or what he likes. Only thing is, we can't have any trouble—any trouble at all. I've spent too much time setting this caper up to have the slightest thing go wrong."

Pearl shrugged; and then she smiled widely. Her blonde head lifted and the stretched hair shoulders back, making Dent aware of her sensuous, long-limbed body. She sucked in her flat stomach so that her breasts stood out sharply with invitation. It was the sort of idle, lazy gesture that almost any woman might make. In Pearl, it seemed somehow obscene.

"Coffee it is," she said. "Only I wish to God that they'd get here. I don't like this waiting one little bit."

Once more Cal Dent looked at his watch. He shrugged and reached for the Sunday supplement lying on the table. He was beginning to worry, but no one, watching him, could possibly have detected it. That was a significant quality of the man's character—this capacity for complete self-control. It was his essential strength; the amazing coolness was ever a part of him.

There was that business of the abortive break out in Colorado, some four years back, when he and three other lifers had held a cell block for sixty-four hours with prison-made weapons against a hundred officers equipped with machine guns and gas bombs. He hadn't cracked then.

There had been other times, too, plenty of them, during those thirteen years he spent behind bars. The remaining twenty years of his life, when he had been free, had been tense with his unconventional struggle against a society that had never been able to understand him.

At thirty-three, Cal Dent rarely thought back. No, he thought ahead. Even now, as he and Pearl waited in the summer cottage in the desolate reaches of Long Island's South Shore, waited for Red and the others, he was thinking ahead. Thinking and making his plans.

He was working it on a precision timetable. Red should be here no later than one-thirty. It was almost that now. Dent knew exactly what he would do in case the car failed to show on schedule. He would stick to his timetable. There would be the fifteen-minute leeway period; then he and Pearl would climb into the Packard sedan and blow. They'd wait for a half hour at the diner, where the road intersected the Montauk Pike. Wait and start.

The coffeepot started to boil and Pearl juggled a pair of heavy porcelain cups with all the careless dexterity of a graduate hawdinger. She'd done it often enough in those last three days to know that Dent took his straight, without sugar. She pulled a chair up to the kitchen table and sat sideways,

crossing her long bare legs at the knees. Her short, tailored skirt fell carelessly, exposing the soft white flesh of her thigh. It would have driven Red crazy.

Pearl lifted the cup to lips that were a crimson gash in her white face. She blew across the top to cool the hot brown liquid. Her eyes were blue smudges as she half closed them and watched Dent over the rim.

"Think everything went O.K.?" she asked.

"Yeah."

"You don't suppose maybe the cops at the toll gate . . ."

"I don't want to think about it," Dent said. "Don't borrow trouble. Talk about something else."

"All right," Pearl said, the husky quality of her voice strong with emphasis. "I'll talk about us. Do you like me, Dent?"

"I like you."

"Well, you don't seem . . ."

Dent swung to look the girl full in the face. He leaned forward, hands holding the table's edge.

Pearl thought, God, he isn't really human. He's like a lean, tawny cat.

His leathery, spare face was ascetic in its immobility, and the prematurely white hair, with its cowlick over one eye, lent him the contradictory look of a little boy who had suddenly grown too old. He had charm, but it was a dangerous sort of charm. The mediocrity of his lean, averaged-size body was belied by the dynamic quality of his personality.

"Listen, kid," he said, his voice a low monotone, "get something straight. You're a damned good-looking dame. If I went for dames I'd go for you. You've got a lot of things I want." His eyes took in several of the things. "But let's get one matter settled. You are, or at least Red thinks you are, his dame. That, alone, doesn't mean a damn thing. That wouldn't hold me."

He stopped to let it sink in.

"But right now Red is working with me on a job. I need him and I need him happy. The job comes first. I'm not horsing around with five hundred grand. It isn't every day I dream up a caper like this; it isn't every day I get something this well organized. Until we finish this deal, I ain't thinking of you, or any other girl."

"When it's all over, when the dust has settled down—well, that's something else again. Then, if you still feel the way you seem to feel now, I'll . . ."

The girl's face flushed and her eyes narrowed in quick anger.

"Who said anything about my wanting you," she said.

"You don't have to say it. I know."

Her breath came out hard and short and Dent could feel the fury mount in her. And then suddenly she made one of those quick switches that Cal Dent had noticed were so characteristic of her.

The wide Slavic mouth opened and even handsome teeth were twin rows of white beads. The blue smudges lost their sultriness and she was laughing. Her hand reached out and it was with almost a gesture of camaraderie that she rubbed Dent's arm.

"O.K., Cal. You're pretty smart. I'll wait around and behave."

She stood up and walked once more to the window. Dent was glancing at his watch when she again spoke.

"Car coming," she said.

Even as the girl turned, Cal Dent was on his feet. One hand stretched to cut off the muted radio. His other reached for the sub-machine gun lying on the shelf over the brick fireplace. With two strides he was across the room and at Pearl's side. He had swept up a pair of field glasses from the table and he tucked the Tommy gun under his right arm as he raised the glasses.

He traced the silhouette of the large black sedan as the heavy car pulled through the loose sand of the dunes a thousand yards from the house. The whisper of a sigh escaped his lips.

"It's them," he said. "Stand by the door."

Dent himself went back to his chair at the table. He dropped the glasses gently and placed the machine gun next to the glasses. He faced the weathered pine door as Pearl opened it to a quick double knock.

Red entered first.

Six foot four inches tall, shoulders almost as wide as the jamb of the doorway he entered, he stooped to come into the room. He held the child in his arms, carrying her sixty-two pounds as though she were a loosely stuffed doll. Long, straw-colored hair was flung across his shoulder and her tear-stained face was half concealed by the adhesive tape locking her mouth. Her eyes were huge and round in their blueness and it was obvious at once that she was frightened into a state of semi-hysteria.

Red stood the child on her feet and his broken prize fighter's face smiled crookedly. He flung off his chauffeur's cap to expose flaming hair, cut crew fashion. A discolored cigarette hung from his full mouth.

"Here's Toostie," he said.

But neither Dent nor Pearl was watching him. They were watching the girl who had followed him in, prodded by Gino.

Terry Ballin was something to look at. Even with the thin trickle of blood that had dried at the corner of her mouth and the right eye rapidly turning a nasty purple, she was still something. The collar of her turtle-neck sweater was smothered by her auburn hair; her face was like that of a very, very beautiful sixteen-year-old child. Her body was that of a very desirable woman.

Gino, a thin sparrow in his tight pin-striped suit, his soft gray Homburg slanting over one eye, pushed her again, well into the room, and closed the door. He stood just a trifle over five feet and couldn't have weighed a hundred and ten pounds dripping wet. His eyes were black pebbles in a dead, sickly face; his mouth was hard and cruel under an overly large nose.

"This one," he said, nudging the girl, "she wants to give me an argument." He pushed her into a chair, and as Terry Ballin fell back her eyes were dark with loathing.

"Aw, lay off her," Red said. "She—"

"Shut up," Dent cut in. "Did everything go O.K.?"

"O.K.," Gino said.

Dent turned to Terry Ballin.

"You this kid's nurse?"

The girl nodded. There was no fear in her, only shock and hatred.

"All right, then," Dent said. "I guess you know what's happened. The Wilton kid here is being kidnapped—has been kidnapped. You happen to be with her. You're lucky to be alive. Behave yourself, do what you're told, and you may stay alive—for the time being."

He turned to Pearl.

"Take the kid and the dame into the back room." Again looking at Terry Ballin, he said, "The room has been soundproofed. The windows are shuttered from the outside and barred. There's no way out except through the door. So make it easy for yourself. Don't give Pearl a hard time and she won't give you one. Now take the kid in there and quiet her down."

Pearl went to the rear of the room, opposite the windows facing the road, and opened a door. Janie Wilton leaned quickly against the Ballin girl's legs and her eyes looked up pleadingly. Staring straight ahead, Terry walked the child toward the door.

The Ballin girl followed her.

If I could only get Pearl out of here for a few minutes, Red was thinking, I'd sure as hell take a crack at that.

This was the biggest job since the Lindbergh case—and Dent had every angle figured. It was perfect.

Then Red and Gino had to kidnap two people instead of one—a little girl worth a half-million dollars and a big girl worth the highest price anyone ever had to pay.

I'd like to beat her, Gino thought to himself. Beat her and beat her and beat her until she cried to God for mercy. God, I'd like to get my nails into that soft flesh!

Trouble. That's what Cal Dent was thinking. A dame who could be plenty of trouble. Damn it, they should have killed her.

When he looked over at Red and Gino he also knew, as well as if they had yelled out what was passing through their minds.

It was a part of Cal Dent's smartness; one reason why he was the boss. He always knew. Thus he planned in advance for any unexpected breaks, good or bad.

Dent used the pencil clipped to his shirt pocket to cross off a date on the lumber company's advertising calendar thumbtacked to the wall. It was Monday, October 20th.

Red and Gino were sitting at the white kitchen table when Dent returned. He carried a quart bottle of beer and three glasses.

"Tell me exactly what happened."

Red talked first.

"Everything," he said in his inconspicuously high, squeaky voice, "went according to plan. We waited in Stamford to see the messenger take off. He left at five after eight. At eight-twenty we were parked three blocks from the Wilton house. A car passed us just as the station wagon turned out of the drive, but it kept on going. We followed the girl and edged her to the curb two blocks away. No one was in sight. She thought it was an accident at first and pulled her brakes and started to yell at me."

"I got out an' slapped her," Gino cut in.

"Let Red tell it," Dent said.

Red took his eyes away from Gino. There was an odd, half-quizzical, half-doubtful expression on his freckled face.

"Gino showed her a gun; told her it was a snatch. I reached in and took the kid. She started to fight, but I calmed her down. The dame tol' her to do as we said. She's smart. Knew what was happening. We left the car where it was. Put the kid and the girl in back of the sedan and started down the road for the Merritt Parkway."

"No one see anything?"

"Nothing. Everything went smooth. Had the curtains drawn in the limousine and Gino gagged the kid and kept the gun on the girl."

Dent was thoughtful for a moment.

"If everything went smooth," he asked,

"how come the girl's marked up?"

"Gino socked her a couple of times."

Dent turned to the little man. "Why?"

"Showed her I meant business," he said.

"What's the matter with hitting her, anyway? I wanted to make sure she stayed quiet going through traffic. Anyway, I still think we should've bumped her off right then."

"Nothing's the matter with hitting anyone," Dent said, "if it's necessary. All right, go on, Red."

"Nothing else," Red said. "Here we are. No trouble, nothing. We crossed the East River at the Whitestone Bridge. The kid was lying in the bottom of the car with a blanket over her when we went through the tolls. No one could see in the back, anyway, with the shades down. The girl was quiet."

"I held a knife on her," Gino said. "A knife always keeps 'em quiet."

Dent nodded.

"O.K., boys," he said. "Take the car out to the barn and start stripping her down. Plates and everything. We're through with it. I don't think anyone would ever make a connection, but we'll take no chances." He poured three more beers from a second quart bottle. Five minutes later Red and Gino left the cottage and Dent heard the engine of the car as it started.

He watched from the window as they drove into the old barn, some hundred yards from the house. This place, in late October, after the summer people had returned to their city apartments, was, he reflected, as ideal hideout.

Two other lonely, wind-swept houses were in sight, and then nothing but the interminable sand dunes and the sea. The other houses had been deserted for several weeks now and only an occasional beach patrolman ever went near them.

Dent himself had found the place. Red and Pearl had rented it and had been living in it for more than two months, as man and wife. The story they had given out was that Red was just back from a hitch in the Army, was newly married and taking a six-month rest. He wanted quiet. They had told the tradespeople in the nearest town that they would stay on until December.

Gino had been casually mentioned as Pearl's brother, who stayed with them now and then. Dent himself, up until three days ago, had not been near the place. It was as safe a hideout as he could figure, near enough to the city to get there within a short time, but far enough out and lonely enough to avoid the curiosity of nosy neighbors. An ideal spot.

As Dent thought it over, the door to the back room opened and Pearl returned. Carefully she locked the door behind her.

"How are they?" Dent asked.

"They're all right," Pearl said. She reached into the cupboard and took out a bottle of gin. "Now?"

"Now."

Pearl poured herself a straight shot.

"The kid's O.K.," she said. "She's quieted down now and stopped crying. Gino slapped her around a little, too." She drained her shot without a chaser. "But the dame! You say she's a nurse? With what she's got, brother, she could be wearing mink and living in a Park Avenue penthouse. Why did they bring her along and what the hell do we do with her, anyway?"

"I'll decide that later," Dent said.

"It's all right with me," Pearl said. "But keep her away from Red. I saw the way he looked her over."

"Jealous?" said Dent.

"Damn right," Pearl said. "But you don't want any trouble now, Cal, do you?"

"There'll be no trouble," Dent said.

"I don't get it," Dent said. "Why bring her here?"

"Look," Dent said, irritation in his voice. "If we didn't take her, she could have identified us. On the other hand, if the boys had killed her then and there, it could have spread the alarm too quick. I wanted to play it safe; get them back here before anything breaks."

He shook his head when Pearl gestured toward the bottle. Walking over to the iron sink, next to the kerosene cooking stove, he took his shaving brush down and began working up a lather. His hand was steady as he pulled the straight-edged razor over the stubble of his cheeks. Dent was a meticulously clean man.

At six o'clock that evening, Cal Dent carefully parked the car at the curb, twisted the key in the lock, and stepped to the street. He walked slowly over to the drugstore, entered, and bought the late afternoon edition of the World-Telegram. Leaving the drugstore, he moved down the street several doors and turned in at the tavern. The bartender nodded to him and Dent said, "Bourbon, water on the side."

He spread the front page of the paper on the bar. The light was bad but he had no trouble making out the headlines. Nobody seemed to be getting anywhere in Korea. The boys were still stealing everything in Washington that wasn't nailed down. And nothing on the Wilton case.

Dent had almost finished his drink when the door opened and a short, thick-bodied man in his late forties entered. His face was blue-veined and he wore a dark suit and a dirty white shirt. A felt hat was pulled well over his eyes. He stood next to Dent and ordered a beer. Dent had another bourbon. Five minutes later both left. They entered the car together, Cal Dent taking the wheel.

"Well, everything go all right?" The fat man looked straight ahead. His voice was very deep, but he talked in a sort of half whisper.

"Right on schedule," Dent said. "They're all at the place now. It's going like clock-work."

The fat man grunted.

"I'll drive you into Smithtown," Dent said. "You can get a train out of there in about an hour. Get back to New York. I'll see you tomorrow at four o'clock."

Some time later, as the fat man left the car at the Long Island Rail Road station, Dent handed him a small round package. "Here's the recording," he said. "We were able to get it this afternoon. It's a beauty."

Cal Dent was back at the hideout by ten after nine. As he pulled the car around to the ocean side of the cottage and cut the engine, the blaring tones of music from a radio came from the shack and he cursed under his breath. He jerked the emergency brake savagely and twisted the ignition key from the lock. He entered the front room unheard by the others. Gino was slumped on the broken-backed ottoman, a pencil in his hand, marking up a Racing Form.

Pearl and Red sat opposite each other at the card table, the gin bottle between them, listlessly playing two-handed rummy. Dent strode to the portable set and snapped it silent. The others looked up quickly.

"What the hell is wrong with you mug?" Damn it, anyone could have walked in here and you'd never have known it. What is this, anyway, a kaffeeklatch? Do I have to do all your thinking for you?"

"Aw, look," Red said, "there ain't nobody within five miles o' this place." "Shut up," Dent snapped. "Maybe there ain't, but the noise that radio was making would wake 'em up ten miles away. Keep it down if you have to hear it. And for the love of God, at least listen to what's going on. You want some strange car, maybe a beach cop, driving up on you?"

The others looked sheepish, except for Gino, who continued marking up his scratch sheet as though no one else were in the room.

"See Fats?" Red asked at last, standing up and brushing the cards aside.

"I saw him and I gave him the recording. Also I got the papers; nothing broke so far. How about the radio?"

"We got the nine-o'clock news," Pearl said. "Nothing yet. What do you think, Dent? Do you suppose they called in the law?"

Dent shrugged and sat down at the table. Pearl coughed, without bothering to cover her mouth. She brought him a cup of black coffee, knowing he preferred it to a shot.

"Jees," Red said, "they musta squawked."

"There's no way of telling," Dent said. "If Wilton believed the note, believed that we are watching him, he's probably keeping his mouth shut. If he talks, we're bound to know about it. The cops could never keep it from the newspaper boys. Not for long, anyway."

"So let 'em sing," Red cut in. "They still gotta pay up to get the kid."

"He'll pay, all right," Dent said. "He'll pay after he hears Fats play that tape tomorrow morning."

Pearl coughed again and reached for the gin bottle. This time Red stopped her.

"You mind your own business, Red," Pearl snapped. "If I wanna—"

"Red's right," Pearl interrupted. "Take it easy, kid. We got a long, nervous wait and I don't want no one getting hung. Sit down and we'll play a little three handed."

Pearl shrugged and put the bottle down. "How they doing inside?" Dent asked as he started to deal. He nodded toward the door at the end of the room.

"Kid's sleeping," Pearl answered. "The girl wouldn't eat anything for dinner."

Dent nodded and fanned his cards.

Gino stood up and walked over to the radio set. He twisted the dial slowly as the volume came up. After several minutes he swore under his breath and slapped the set.

"Can't get that station with the California results," he said, disgust in his voice.

"Get a news report," Dent ordered.

Gino shrugged and again turned the dial. He found WNEW, and Dent, looking at his wrist watch, saw that it was exactly half past nine. He stopped playing as the newscaster's voice cut in.

At once Dent subconsciously realized his watch must be a couple of minutes slow.

... and up to an early hour this evening police had expressed a belief that the child had been taken by her nurse."

The rounded, unctuous voice of the announcer finished the sentence as the room suddenly became deadly quiet but for the slap of Red's cards as they fell to the table top. Gino stood back from the set, his small head to one side. Both Red and Pearl watched the radio with a sort of deadly fascination. Dent's face was still and noncommittal. And then the voice continued:

"But it has been learned by this station that FBI men late today were closeted with the Wilton family in their Riverside, Connecticut, home, and it is now believed that both little Janie Wilton and her nurse, Miss Terry Ballin, are in the hands of a gang of professional kidnappers, despite the fact that there has been no kidnapping case following these classic lines within the last dozen years. It is rumored that a note was received by the family shortly after the child disappeared on her way to school. The station wagon, which has been recovered, is in the hands of the State Police and is being carefully gone over by laboratory technicians. This station will interrupt programs later in the evening, in case of further developments, to give you the latest news on what promises to become one of the biggest stories since the tragic Lindbergh case."

Gino quickly reached up and snapped off the set as the announcer went on to talk of late developments in the Korean tunic talks.

Dent's sigh was like a whisper.

"Well, that's it," he said. "Wilton talked."

"The son-of-a-bitch," Gino said.

"What the hell did you expect?" Dent snapped. "You can't keep a thing like this quiet. We knew that he probably would talk. So what? It won't matter."

"Thing to do now is just be careful and take it easy. Gino, get that radio back on, but keep it down low. I want to hear everything that's happening. Let's pick up the cards and keep going. We got a long night in front of us."



"How was I to know it's mating season for whales?"

Red stretched and yawned. "You an' Pearl play," he said. "I'm going upstairs and hit the sack."

Red didn't bother to say good night, but started for the door leading to the staircase. Pearl looked at Dent and winked. Gino was back on the couch, the racing paper folded in his hands and his hat pulled over his eyes.

Dent drew the cards together and started reshuffling.

"Two-handed is better," Pearl said, and there was a subtle note of double meaning in her husky voice. "Deal 'em off, Cal."

Dent finally snapped the radio off shortly after three-thirty. Pearl had long ago followed Red upstairs to bed. Gino still lay on the couch, his mouth wide and snoring gently. Dent looked at him for a moment with distaste and then shrugged.

A minute later he walked to the door of the room in which Terry and the child were. He listened carefully and then reached up and snapped the heavy padlock on the door. The precaution was as much to protect Terry and the little girl, he reflected bitterly, as it was to keep them from escaping.

Minutes later and he too climbed the staircase and entered the small unfinished bedroom that was a twin to the one occupied by Red and Pearl.

He was careful to fold his trousers and hang them neatly from the top bureau drawer. He hung his shirt and coat on the back of a chair and climbed between heavy Army surplus blankets. He cursed Pearl under his breath for not bothering to buy sheets. The swine, he thought, they all live like pigs. And they don't even know the difference.

Well, once this caper was over and he had his split, it would be the last he'd see of them. Except possibly Pearl. With Pearl, he might do something. She had the raw material and, properly molded she might really be . . .

He fell into a nervous half sleep thinking about it.

In the next room Red was stretched flat on his back in the sagging double bed, snoring deeply and sleeping dreamlessly. Pearl lay wide awake at his side, curled into a tight ball and hating the big man.

She had heard Cal Dent come upstairs and then later had followed in her mind's eye his movements as he had stripped and climbed into bed. There was the click as he had shut off the light.

She wanted to go in to him, but she knew that she didn't dare. Again she thought of Red, and again she hated him. She thought of hate and that made her think of Gino, downstairs. Another rat, she reflected, but a mean, vicious one, not like Red, who was merely a big, overgrown animal.

They were all rats, all but Dent. Fats Morn, he was probably the worst of the lot.

Pearl finally fell asleep, mentally congratulating herself that at least she wasn't stuck in the same house with Fats, too.

CHAPTER THREE

The sun was a dull red disk riding the mast that rose from the almost flat waters of the ocean. Its opaque rays fell on the sands of the beach before the lonely cottage and died there. The air was chill and damp and nothing stirred. Only the sound of the breakers as they crashed against the shore and incessantly retreated back to sea disturbed the deadly quiet of the morning.

The cottage itself squatted some hundred and fifty yards back from the shoreline, lonely and bleak. Its clapboard side had been whitened by the sun and the blasting of uncountable grains of wind-born sand. Behind the cottage were the dunes.

The low, rambling structure looked blindly at the ocean from shuttered windows. Behind the windows, closed and barred, were Terry and the child.

Next to these twin windows, which were in a single-story wing that had been added to the building long after it had been built, was the narrow end of the original house. The architect, preferring a view to the east rather than to the south, had put the chimney at this end. The front of the house, its ground floor taken up entirely by the combination living room and kitchen, faced the east. There was a center door that divided two pairs of glassed and screened windows. The roadway led to this door. The two second-story bedrooms also had windows facing east.

There was a circular drive in front of the cottage, and from this a pair of worn wheel tracks faded off around to the blind rear of the structure, leading to the combination garage and barn.

It was, all in all, a poorly-planned house, designed for careless week-end living rather than for comfort or convenience.

In the rear ground-floor bedroom there were two Army cots, each covered by a pair of dirty gray blankets. The remaining furniture consisted of a well-mended old-fashioned rocking chair, two straight-backed chairs, and a small wobbly card table. A gaudily patterned linoleum rug almost completely covered the floor area. Walls were a dirty dun, with the paper peeling in several places. From the center of the ceiling an electric cord dangled a naked forty-watt bulb. The windows were all but opaque with dirt. Through them could be seen the slats of the heavy shutters, closed and barred from the outside.

On the table were two bowls, each partly filled with the milk and dry cereal that neither Janie nor Terry had been able to finish. They had, however, emptied their glasses of frozen orange juice. Terry had been given a heavy mug of black coffee.

An old-fashioned washbasin, with a large white pitcher, stood in one corner. There was a stringy Turkish towel over the back of one chair. A covered chamber pot stood near the washbasin.

Terry sat on the edge of one of the Army cots and Janie stood straight between her legs. The girl was pulling a comb through the child's straw-colored hair.

"But Terry," Janie said, "you should tell them I want to go home."

Terry Ballin's voice was a caress as she talked with the child. Bruised and frightened, she found a new strength in trying to soothe Janie Wilton. Her voice was low and sweet, with just a trace of the accent she had brought over from Dublin three years before.

Terry knew full well what the child was going through; she had known that lonely, lost feeling most of her life. An orphan, she had been brought up by her uncle, a man who made it a practice to get drunk and beat his wife with a deadly regularity on each week end. She herself was used to blows. She understood how Janie must feel: Janie who in the seven years of her life had known only the selfless love of an adoring and overly indulgent family.

"Darlin'," Terry said, her voice a whisper, "don't you worry. Your daddy will see to it that we get back home all right. These men want money. You can be sure your daddy will give it to them. Just be a good girl now and don't cry, no matter what happens."

"They can't make me cry," Janie said, her mouth suddenly set in childish stubbornness.

Terry looked up, her eyes as the knob of the door opened and she turned. A maid that later it appeared and Pearl stood facing them.

"I'll stay with the kid," she said, not looking the girl in the eye. "You come on in the other room. They want to talk to you."

Terry stood up and walked toward the door.

"Don't leave me," Janie said, her thin voice a near scream. She took two quick steps toward Terry.

Pearl moved to cut her path.

"I won't hurt you, honey," she said, her voice deep with that odd huskiness that usually distinguished it only when she talked with men. "You just let Pearl sit and talk with you, baby. I'll tell you a story."

"I want Terry!"

Terry Ballin turned. "Janie," she said, and despite the caress of her tone there was a note of pleading. "Be a good girl now. You stay with this lady. I'll be back soon."

She closed the door behind her.

Red and Gino, at the card table, sat facing the door. Dent stood across the room between the windows. All of them stared coldly at Terry as she entered.

"Sit down," Dent pointed to the ottoman.

Terry hesitated a second, then crossed the room and sank to the couch.

"I'm going to ask you some questions," Dent said. "Be smart. Answer. Tell the truth."

Terry said nothing. She kept her eyes on Dent's face.

As she watched him, she was conscious of the band music coming from the muted radio. She was conscious of Gino who stared at her, his eyes black and expressionless under the brim of his hat. He sat astride a straight-backed chair, carefully cleaning his nails with the blade of a slender penknife. There was something vile about this little man with his meticulous movements, his dead white flesh, and his violent, oddly assorted features.

Red had stretched to his feet and was leaning on the mantelpiece over the chimney. He was unshaven and the stubble stood out from the heavy flesh of his face. His hair stood like a field of red wire on his rounded head and his eyes were crinkled and god-natured under the heavy, scarred brow.

Red took in the girl's slender figure and rounded limbs and he felt an almost uncontrollable longing to caress her soft flesh. Goddam it, he thought, why the hell had he ever brought Pearl in on this? If it wasn't for Pearl, he could . . .

Dent's soft, cynical voice cut into his thoughts.

"How long have you been with the Wiltons?"

For a moment Terry hesitated. She would say nothing. Why, she thought, should she help them in any possible way? Why should she give them the satisfaction of answering their questions, even though the questions themselves might, to all appearances, be without value?

"I asked," Dent repeated, "how long have you been with the Wiltons?"

Terry looked at the wall over his shoulder, her lips pressed together in a straight, uncompromising line.

Gino came to his feet; he moved with the stealth of an alley cat. The knife with which he had been cleaning his nails snapped shut and he slipped it into his pocket as he crossed the room. Before the girl had a chance to move, his right hand whipped out and he slapped her sharply across the mouth.

Red moved fast and his hairy hand caught Gino by the back of his coat. He pulled him close to his chest, a thick bare arm around the little man's neck.

Dent's voice was still deceptively soft and he spoke without taking his eyes from the girl.

"Drop him, Red," he said. "And you, Gino. When I want her slapped, I'll tell you about it. You can get your looks in later. Right now I'm handling the show. Get back to your chair and sit down."

As Red released Gino, Dent again spoke to the girl.

"Dummy up on me, sister, and I'll really

let Gino go to work on you. It's the kind of work he likes. Now answer me—how long you been with the Wiltons?

"Three years."

"Do you think they trust you—completely?" Terry nodded without hesitation. "Yes," she said. "Completely."

"Trust you enough so that if we sent you for the ransom, they'd hand it to you?"

"They trust me completely."

"Well, that's all I wanted to know. We aren't going to send you for the money—we have a better way of getting it. But I just wanted to know. And suppose you were to talk to Wilton or Mrs. Wilton on the phone. They'd believe anything you told them?"

"They would."

"O.K., sister. Maybe you'll have a chance to talk to them pretty soon. How's the kid?"

"She's all right. But she should have clean clothes and the right food."

"The clothes she's got will have to do," Dent said shortly. "About the food, tell Pearl what you want and maybe you'll get it."

Dent started to get to his feet. Suddenly he stopped, halfway up from the chair, and there was a quick alert look on his face. He turned toward the windows in the front.

Red opened his mouth to say something, but Dent waved him silent.

And then, a second later, they all heard it: the sound of a car engine, as the vehicle labored through the heavy sands toward the house.

Dent moved with quiet, deadly swiftness. He reached for the submachine gun lying on the mantel as he barked out his directions.

"Get the girl in the back room, Red," he ordered. "And get Pearl out here. You Gino, get on the stairway. And you better have your gun handy. But for God's sake don't go off half cocked. Do nothing unless I make the first move."

He was across the room as he finished speaking and looking out the corner of the window toward the road.

Hurriedly he turned back, as Red was rushing Terry Ballin through the door.

"Jeep," he said. "One guy. Don't know what it is, but play it cagey."

Pearl hurried from the back room as Dent, the machine gun under one arm, the pin glass bottle and the field glasses in his hand, passed her in the doorway.

"Cut that damned radio," he ordered harshly. "I'll be able to hear you, but I won't be able to see you. Stand with your back to the door, and bang on it with your heel if it's trouble. I'll be ready and waiting."

He slammed the door behind him.

Dropping the gun on one of the cots, Dent quickly took a roll of tape from his pocket. A second later he had slapped a strip over the frightened child's mouth. Janie's eyes suddenly welled with tears and she jerked to get away.

"Tell her to lie on the bed quiet—and tell her quick," Dent ordered Terry, who stood wide-eyed in the center of the room.

Terry at once went to the child and whispered soothingly to her. She half covered her with a blanket and turned her face to the wall. In a moment the little girl, trembling between anger and an unrecognized fear, lay quiet. Terry stood up.

"Watch her," Dent snapped. He heard the rap on the outer door.

"I ain't goin' to hurt you," Red said in a low voice, walking over to Terry. "But we can't take no chances."

He reached out, grabbing Terry around her slender waist. He twisted her slight body and drew her to him, so that her back was pressed to his broad body. One huge arm circled her waist and the other reached up and his large hand covered her mouth. He was careful not to cover her nose, so that she could breathe.

Half lifting the girl off her feet, Red pulled her over beside the bed.

For a second Terry attempted to struggle. She felt the big man's arm tighten around her waist and the breath quickly collapsed in her lungs. She leaned back, her senses reeling.

Red, his eyes on the child and waiting for the slightest sign of trouble, became aware of a new, pleasant sensation. He was conscious all at once of the girl in his arms, not as a captive, but as a woman. He released his hold slightly and his stubby chin half caressed her auburn hair. His breath came deep and hard.

Dent crouched at the thin door, the submachine gun held lightly under his right arm. His ears were alert and he heard Pearl cross the room and lift the latch.

"Yes?" Pearl's throaty voice was deep and noncommittal. Dent hoped she'd have enough sense to pull her robe across her breasts, which had been half exposed when she had passed him in the doorway.

The voice that answered was young and strong.

"I wonder, miss, if you'd mind if I fished off your beach for a while. The strippers are running along here, and I'd like to throw a line in."

"Fish?" Pearl sounded as though she didn't understand the meaning of the word.

"Well," the man's voice went on, "you see, I'm Jack Fanwell. I live in town, but in the fall I come out this way for striped bass when they're running. Old Mr. Albright always lets me fish his beach, but of course I know you folks have rented this place, so I just thought I'd ask if it's O.K. first."

"Mr. Albright?" Pearl said, not quite able to follow. Dent cursed the girl for not remembering that Albright was the man who had rented them the cottage.

And then Pearl was talking again. "Why, I guess so," she said. "But let me just ask my husband." She backed toward the door behind which Dent was concealed and she went on in a slightly higher voice:

"Is it all right, dear, if this gentleman fishes?"

Red was looking at Dent blankly and quickly Cal nodded to him, motioning for him to say something.

"O.K., baby," Red suddenly bellowed. "Sure it's O.K. Tell 'im to go ahead an' fish." He shrugged his shoulders at Dent.

There were several more words and then the outer door again closed. A second later Dent heard the jeep's engine.

He nodded at Red to stay with Terry and the child and carefully opened the door and went into the living room.

"Now, what was that all about?" Pearl asked, a bewildered look on her face.

"Fish," said Gino in disgust. "Who the hell ever heard of fishing in the middle of winter in the middle of this God-forsaken place? I don't like it."

Dent didn't like it either, but he had too much native caution to let the others know that there was any doubt in his mind.

"Lots of nuts fish," he said shortly. "Tell me, Pearl, what did he look like? How did he act?"

"Well, you heard him," Pearl said. "He was a young fella, say around twenty-five or six. Almost as tall as Red, but thin and wiry. He had curly black hair and a nice face. But he was dressed like a bum."

"All fishermen dress like bums," Dent said. "Did he sound legit?"

Pearl shrugged. "How would I know? Anybody wants to come 'way out here for fish must be nuts. You can buy all the fish you want in the A & P."

Dent walked to the window and looked out. A thousand yards away he made out the jeep, pulled up near the shore. As he watched he saw the man get out and fool around for

a few minutes. And then, using the powerful field glasses, he observed him climb into waist-deep waders and attach a reel to a seven-foot pole. A moment later he was standing in the surf and casting.

"Well, he seems to handle the rod like a professional, anyway," Dent said. "Chances are he's on the up and up. But God, I wouldn't know. Does Red know anything about fishing?"

Red himself answered from the doorway. "Me, I like clams," he said.

"That's what he knows," Pearl said. Gino grunted and went to the radio.

Dent turned from the window.

"Pearl, get into some clothes. Get down there and talk to him. But damn it, let him do most of the talking. Sort of hint around that your husband is sick and suffering from shock and that you want to keep it as quiet around here as you can. Be sure not to let him get any information—form any suspicions. But if you can, in a roundabout way, let him know that it would be better if he were to do his fishing somewhere else. But be careful as hell."

Pearl nodded and started upstairs to climb into a sweater and a pair of slacks.

Gino was back on the couch, lying with his eyes closed. Red stood at the window with the glasses, watching the fisherman, and Dent returned to Terry and the child.

Janie sat on the side of the bed and there were tears in her wide blue eyes. Terry had just pulled the tape from her mouth.

"It's up to you to talk to the kid," Dent said. "We don't want to hurt her, but we can't take any chances. When someone comes, we gotta be careful. Try and make her understand that. Try and make her understand that if she behaves O.K. she'll get back to her family pretty soon."

Terry looked up and nodded.

"Any you," Dent went on. "You remember one thing! You try to get away, or make any noise, and you're dead. You wanta help this kid, just be careful and do what you're told."

He turned and left the room, closing the door behind him.

Pearl was ready to leave and Red was talking to her.

"Dammit," he said, "you don't have to get yourself up like a Tenth Avenue chippie to talk to some dumb fisherman. You're supposed to talk to him, not—"

"You want I should look like some tramp?" Pearl asked, lifting her shoulder in disdain. "You think I don't know how to dress? Why..."

"Cut it," Dent said. "Leave her alone, Red. Pearl knows what she's doing."

Pearl slammed the door behind her as she went out.

"I'm going in town this afternoon," Dent said. "When that goon gets off the beach, Pearl can drive me in and pick up the papers and the groceries. Red, you gotta stay here in case anyone else shows up by accident."

And Gino, he stays, too. But I want Gino to keep out of sight. Now, for God's sake, let's not have any trouble while I'm gone."

"Trouble," Red said. "What kinda trouble we gonna have?"

"None, I hope," Dent said quietly. "Only one thing: Don't you and Pearl fight. And stay the hell away from that girl in there. You monkey around her and you know damn well Pearl'll blow her top."

"What me, Red?" Red said, innocence wide on his face.

"Yeah, you," Dent said shortly.

Red blushed. "I wouldn't hurt her," he said. "You better tell Gino—"

"I wouldn't go near the dame," Gino cut in.

Dent started to answer when again they heard the sound of the jeep's motor starting. As he went to the window, Pearl returned to the house.

"What happened?" Dent asked sharply. "Why, nothing happened," Pearl said, and shrugged. "I only told him that my husband—this bum here," and she turned and nodded at Red—"that my husband was down with measles and I thought it might be catching."

CHAPTER FOUR

The fishermen who had come down from New England, crossing Long Island Sound more than a hundred years back in their search for new places to settle, had called the tiny hamlet Land's End. Perhaps some fifty families settled there eventually. Now, more than a hundred years later, the village had changed comparatively little.

Land's End was about an hour's drive from Smithtown, and the little collection of white Cape Cod houses lay about a mile inland and two miles east of the highway. It was here that Dent had rendezvoused with Fats Morn, and it was here that Pearl came to do her desultory shopping. The village consisted of a supermarket, a stationery and novelty store, a drugstore, a bar, and three or four other rather faded, old-fashioned commercial establishments. There was a post office and a town hall, in the basement of which was the local township police station.

And if the hamlet itself had changed little in a hundred years, the character of the people themselves had also undergone but slight alteration with the advent of the industrial age. They were still friendly New Englanders; shrewd, thrifty, conventional, and tight-lipped. They didn't cotton much to strangers.

It wasn't, of course, that they weren't used to strangers. Generation after generation of New Yorkers had trekked out to that part of Long Island for their week ends and their vacations. The villagers were used to them. In fact, the better part of their livelihood depended on them. But they carried on in the old New England tradition, and though they showed no unwillingness to take the strangers' money, they didn't really like them and they rarely made friends with them. The merchants, of course, were polite, but that was about all.

Trains from New York stopped at the village, but Cal Dent had Pearl drive him into Smithtown. It was possible to avoid Land's End and hit the Montauk-New York highway west of the village. Dent felt it would be a mistake to be seen at Land's End, and he was sorry now that he hadn't met Fats in Smithtown the previous night. But he had wanted to have Fats see the tavern. The Land's End Tavern would figure big in his plans before he had completed the job.

On the drive into Smithtown, Cal fiddled with the car radio until he found a news broadcast. The Wilton case was mentioned only briefly; there had been an erroneous report that the youngster and her nurse had been seen boarding a plane at an Albany airport. The announcer said that it was rumored the police had made an arrest. Cal laughed shortly as he cut the station off.

"They probably have," he said. "They usually do arrest the wrong guys."

Pearl kept her eyes on the road and drove carefully, wheeling the large Packard sedan along at a cautious forty miles an hour.

"You're phoning Wilton this afternoon?" she asked.

"That's the idea."

"What are you going to—"

"Leave it to me," Dent said shortly. "After you dump me, get your groceries and get back to the house as soon as you can. Don't hang around the town and don't stop at the tavern. You want something to drink, get some beer in the grocery. But don't waste any time. I feel better with you in the house."

"I'll feel better myself," Pearl said, thinking of the girl, Terry, and the way Red had of looking at her.

It was an odd thing about Pearl; after two years of living with Red, she had completely ceased to want him. Sexually he left her cold. But Pearl was a woman who, voluptuous and desirable herself and constantly pursued by men, still found it impossible to let any man leave her of his own volition.

Pearl couldn't quite understand it, but she found in Dent an attraction she had never seen in Red. Dent, with his slight body, his graying hair, his cold, aloof manner. For some reason he interested her—physically.

Red, too, had interested her at one time. But after that first night she had been bored. Pearl was satisfied only with men whom she found it necessary to pursue.

"I want you to meet the twelve-thirty train tonight at the Land's End station," Dent said. "The place will be deserted at that hour, so there's no reason to drive all the way into Smithtown."

Pearl nodded.

Dent was ten minutes early for his train into town, but Pearl left at once. She drove directly back to Land's End and parked across the street from the town hall and in front of the supermarket. She didn't bother to take the key from the ignition switch as she shut off the motor.

The grocer said, "Good afternoon, Mrs. Mason."

All the summer people had returned to the city by now and he made a little extra effort to be polite. A dollar was a dollar, but it wasn't only that. Pearl was the kind of woman of whom the grocer thoroughly disapproved. She was also the kind that in his secret dreams he hoped to meet and seduce. Pearl affected most people that way.

Pearl gave him her number-two smile. She ordered a couple of bottles of milk, assorted canned vegetables, and other basic necessities. Realizing that her order was a little heavy, she idly commented:

"We're expecting some folks out toward the end of the week. Guess I better get a little extra in."

The grocer smiled.

Pearl also ordered a case of beer.

Returning to the Packard as the grocer piled the cartons in the rear end, Pearl reflected that the last of the gin was gone. She knew that she would have to drive into Smithtown to find a liquor store, and momentarily she cursed herself for not having thought of it while she had been there.

Well, it was too far to go back now. But there would be no harm in dropping by the Land's End Tavern.

Ed, the owner and bartender at the tavern, was old-fashioned. He didn't like to see women, particularly unaccompanied women, come into his place in the afternoon. When Pearl entered, he was alone behind the bar, but he still didn't like it. Pearl stood at the bar for a moment or two before he turned.

"Waitin' for someone, miss?" he asked.

"Waiting for a drink. Gin and Coke."

Ed didn't look happy.

"Rather serve you in a booth," he said.

It made Pearl sore, but she smiled anyway. She was conscious of the muted radio as she turned and found her way to one of the five booths lining the wall opposite the bar. There was a jukebox in one corner of the room, and she was searching for a coin when her hand suddenly froze.

What stopped her was the voice coming from the radio.

An announcer had interrupted the popular music program to say that he had a special news bulletin—the Wilton kidnapping case.

"It had been learned," the voice of the announcer went on, "that a man named Stanislaus Lazarus, chief in a mid-town restaurant,

was arrested at noon today in connection with the Wilton kidnapping. Police traced a telephone call from Lazarus' apartment in the east Bronx to Gregory Wilton's office in lower Manhattan. Lazarus is being questioned. This station will interrupt future broadcasts, in case of any further developments, to give you the latest bulletins."

Ed, the bartender, carried the drink to the table, the gin in a two-ounce shot glass, an uncapped Coke, and a tall glass beside it.

"Terrible thing," he said, "that poor little child being kidnapped. By God, if the police would spend a little more time catching criminals instead of bothering horse players, things like this would never be allowed to happen. Trouble is, all those cops—"

"All those cops what?"

Neither the bartender nor Pearl had heard the door open. Both swung around as the voice cut in. With the light behind him, Pearl could only see a tall, thin man silhouetted against the doorway. He seemed to be wearing a uniform.

"Hi, Jack," Ed said. "I was about to explain to this lady here that all cops are crooks." He laughed as he said it.

As the man walked over to the bar, Pearl suddenly caught her breath and her normally-pale face went dead white.

It was the fisherman, only this time he was a policeman.

Ed asked her if she wanted him to mix it, and she nodded, her eyes glued to the other man, who was now leaning with his back to the bar and idly watching her. There was an amused smile on his rather too thin, angular face.

"Sure we're all crooks," he said in a slow drawl. "And how is your husband, Mrs. Mason?" He looked directly at Pearl.

Quickly Pearl collected herself. What, she wondered, was she getting so jittery about? After all, this Jack Fawcett had to do something. So why not be a policeman?

She looked him square in the face and gave him the number-two smile. It would, after all, be best to be friendly. Also, he was an attractive man, even if he was a cop.

"He's better," she said.

Fawcett nodded. He turned back to the bar as Ed put a beer down in front of him. For the next few minutes the two of them kidded back and forth. Pearl finished her drink and stood up. She fumbled in her purse and finally found a single dollar bill. She walked over and laid it on the damp mahogany.

"I'd better be getting back," she said in a low, husky voice. "Don't like to leave Mr. Mason too long alone."

Fawcett turned to face her.

"Isn't your brother still with you?" he asked.

Pearl realized she had made a slip. Quickly she picked it up, again giving the tall, good-looking policeman her best smile.

"Yes," she said. "Yes, he's still with us. But after all he's a man, and men are never much good with sick people, are they?" She looked up coyly.

As she turned and left the place, she wondered how Fawcett happened to know so much about them. It was true, of course, that when they had first taken the cottage, she had mentioned to the real-estate broker that her brother would be out now and then to visit. But Gino had arrived late at night, by car, and she felt sure no one had seen him around the place.

Well, she reflected as her foot found the clutch of the Packard and she pulled away from the curb, that was the way it was supposed to be in small towns. Everybody knows everybody else's business.

She hoped that they'd be able to get away soon. Pearl was becoming a little nervous. She had been away from the cottage exactly three hours.

Pearl and Dent had been gone for less than an hour when Red began to feel lonely. Several times he had tried to open conversations with Gino, whom he didn't like, but who was, after all, the only person present with the exception of Terry and the child. Occasionally he could hear the two of them moving about in the back room.

Gino had cut each opening short. He was still working on his scratch sheet and he didn't want to be bothered. Red picked up a comic book and looked at it for a few minutes, but he was unable to read, and he had already gone over the pictures a dozen times within the last few days.

Red couldn't stand being alone, and being with Gino was, to all intents and purposes, the same as being alone. Finally, after his third try at a conversation with Gino, who told him to shut up and leave him alone, Red stood up and walked into the rear bedroom.

Little Janie Wilton lay on one of the cots, her face to the wall. She was covered by a blanket and Terry had taken off the child's clothes and hung them over the back of a chair. The youngster, both emotionally and physically exhausted after the events of the past thirty hours, had finally fallen asleep.

Terry, a strand of Auburn hair across her cheek, long slender legs spread wide and her elbows on her knees, looked up, fright suddenly in her face, as Red entered the room. Instinctively she put one finger to her lips.

Red's primitive emotions were always close to the surface. Had Terry been alone in the room and had he come on her looking as she did at that moment, his physical reaction would have been swift and instinctive. He would have taken to the girl with the same indifference with which he might have reached for a drink.

As it was, his eyes followed her finger and rested on the child. His broken, good-natured fighter's face at once assumed a ludicrous air of caution and conspiratorial secrecy. A child was sleeping; he had been as much as told to be quiet. He seemed to rise to his toes as he took a second step into the room. His voice was a parody of a whisper. "Sleepin'?"

"Yes."

Terry brushed the hair away from her face and got to her feet as she spoke.

"I wanted to wash out her clothes while she slept, the poor dear," she said in a very soft whisper. "But I haven't any water."

Red looked perplexed and then, a second later, he smiled widely.

"Bring her clothes into the other room," he said. "You can wash 'em in the sink."

Gino looked down for a moment later as Red re-entered the living room with the girl.

"What's she doin' out here?" he snapped. "She's gonna wash the kid's clothes. I tell her she could."

Red looked stubborn.

"You told her? Who the hell are you tellin' people what to do and what not to do? Dent said she was to stay in the other room." Gino was on his feet, his face mean and taunt.

"Look," Red said, his own heavy cheeks suddenly flushed with anger. "The kid needs clean clothes. So I tell her she can wash her some clean clothes. It ain't hurtin' nothin' for the kid to be clean. So what ya wanna do—make somethin' outa that?"

Gino sneered and sat back on the couch. "All right," he said. "Let her wash. But we'll see what Dent says when he gets back."

"I ain't afraid of Dent," Red said darily. He turned to Terry. "Go on an' wash."

Red slumped into a chair, his back to Gino and facing the sink. His eyes followed every movement of the girl as she rolled up her sleeves and started the water running.

Terry herself tried not to think at all. She knew that if she only kept busy, kept doing something, it would be better. She found a bar of soap and began rubbing the clothes. The ice-cold water made hard work of it. Red sat staring at her, a strange almost child-like look on his face.

Damn it, he thought, this is the kind of dame I should have. Imagine Pearl ever washing out anything! Yeah, he should have tied up with a dame like this. A good, honest girl. A working girl. A girl who loved kids. Not only that, but this dame had everything Pearl had and then some.

For the next few minutes he was completely unaware of anything except Terry. But as he stared at her, the faint glimmer in his chair in a self-induced coma, day-dreaming in a simple childish fashion of what might have been.

Neither Terry nor Red was aware of it when Gino quietly got to his feet. In complete silence, he crossed the room to the door leading into the back room. They didn't hear him or see him as he carefully opened the door and entered the room and then softly closed it behind himself.

For several minutes Gino stood stock-still, his back to the closed door, staring at the cot on which Janie Wilton lay.

The child had turned in her sleep and faced the door. She had been restless and the blanket had fallen from the cot. Her corn-silk hair half covered the delicate little-girl face, and her small, perfectly shaped mouth was half open, exposing the under row of small white teeth. The way the blanket fell from her cot, one arm and half of her upper body lay bare. Her breath came regularly and she seemed to smile slightly as she slept.

Gino's jet eyes were colder than two black agates as he stared at the child. A row of dead-white face, and his large, bulbous nose was tinted a delicate purple.

His hands hung straight by his sides, but the short heavy fingers, so contradictory to the rest of his emaciated body, twitched uncontrollably. There was a thin coating of saliva over his usually dry lips and tiny sweat buds had broken out on his pale forehead.

After several minutes during which he stood like a statue, he slowly crept across the room.

Again, standing over the child, he once more froze into immobility. Only his lips moved as his breath came in short, quick gasps.

And then he reached forward with one hand and slowly stroked the child's hair, barely touching it. He was very alert to her slightest movement, and when she slept on, his hand, with all the lithe, subtle movement of a snake, passed down to her bare shoulder.

When making strange, almost animal noises and his breath came fast and short.

Janie moved once in her sleep and a whispered groan escaped her lips.

Gino's hand stopped in mid-air as though paralyzed. And then, a moment later, when he realized that she hadn't awakened, he again began stroking her shoulder.

Suddenly his heavy thumb and forefinger tightened on the child's tender flesh and he pinched her in hard as he could. And then he fell to his knees at the side of the cot. His other hand came up to cover the child's mouth.

It was the quick, sharp pain caused by that first cruel pinch that brought Janie Wilton suddenly fully awake. For a brief second she stared with wide eyes at the little man kneeling at the side of her bed. In that first moment she failed to associate the pain that had awakened her with his presence.

It was more in curiosity than fright that she spoke.

"What are you doing here?" she said.

But Gino was beyond understanding. He began half to moan and half to cry. The tears welled in his odd, almost blind eyes and his hands were suddenly a frenzy of activity.

The child's curiosity and the faint indignation were swiftly replaced by a nameless fear, and she cried out in alarm and pain.

It was her shattering scream which snapped Red out of his pleasant trance. It also brought Terry whirling from the sink.

Red was the first to reach the door and jerk it open.

By the time the huge ex-prize fighter entered the room, Gino was no longer conscious of anything.

Red's heavy boot caught the little man in the side of his chest and the force of the kick half lifted him to his feet and carried him part way across the room. It broke three of his ribs.

Janie had jumped from the bed and was covering in one corner of the room, holding a corner of a blanket in front of herself. Her eyes were wide and frightened.

"He hurt me," she said in her high, childish voice. "He hurt me. Kick him hard. Hit him."

Terry didn't see what happened next. She rushed to the child and took her in her arms. The little girl buried her face in her shoulder and began to cry softly. For the first time in her life she had experienced complete and total fear.

Red kicked Gino twice more, although by this time the little mobster was unconscious. And then he reached down and lifted him with one huge hand and dragged him from the room. Kicking the door shut behind him with his heels, he lifted Gino so that he was standing out almost straight in front of him.

Red hit him once full in the face, the blow breaking the cartilage of the large nose and cracking off two front teeth at the roots. He dropped him to the floor and a pool of blood rapidly spread around Gino's head.

Red was still staring at the cold form, his own legs spread wide and his breath coming deeply, when Pearl opened the door.

CHAPTER SIX

The conductor helped the drunk off the train at Smithtown. That left only the lean, tubercular case slumped stretched out on the seat up at the front of the car, his mouth wide and his tortured breath coming in long, broken gasps, and the boy and girl who looked like a couple of high-school kids who'd been in town for dinner and a show.

They'd settled down opposite the thin consumptive, the boy with his arm around the girl's shoulder as he talked to her in a low voice and the girl leaning back and looking young and lovely against the conductor's guess that they'd be going all the way to the end of the line.

From where he and Fats sat side by side, in the last seat of the day coach, he knew that no one could hear their voices. They hadn't talked on the way out, as the drunk had been in the seat in front of them, singing at the top of his lungs during most of the trip. Fats had suggested moving, but Dent didn't want to take any chance of calling attention to themselves.

After the drunk left the train at Smithtown, Fats started talking.

"Goddamn it, Cal," he said, leaning close to Dent so that his companion instinctively pulled his head away to avoid the man's sickening breath, "I had to make the phone call from someplace."

"I know you did," Dent said, irritation heavy in his voice. "But you told me you had a safe spot—not to worry about it."

"Lazarus' place was safe," Fats said. "I al-

ready told you that I had a key to the joint that he didn't know about. I told you that no one saw me enter and no one saw me leave."

"How long were you there?"

"Five, ten minutes at the most. It's a ground-floor rear and the front door was open. No one saw me. I just went in, got Wilton on the phone, and let him hear the tape recording with the kid's voice."

"What'd he say?"

"What did he say? How the hell do I know what he said. The second the recording was through, I hung up. I knew the call would be traced. I was outta there in nothing flat."

"Well," Dent said, "it was a tough break. I suppose we should have expected it, but I was hoping Lazarus wouldn't be picked up so soon. Our first idea, breaking into a strange apartment to use a phone, was probably better."

"It was like hell," Fats said annoyed. "I coulda been seen breaking in. And don't forget I had the tape recorder and the tape with me. Lazarus' place was safe. I haven't seen him in over a year and he never knew I had a key to his joint."

Dent grunted. "You wipe up your prints?"

Fats looked at his companion scornfully and didn't answer.

Dent glanced down at his wrist watch and saw that it was ten minutes after midnight.

"I hope to God everything is O.K. at the shack," he said. "The gang's going to be surprised when we both show up."

"I should have stayed in town," Fats said.

"No. Not after they picked up Lazarus. There's no use taking the slightest chance. They'll sweat him till his teeth fall out. They'll ask him about every guy he's ever known. And even if you haven't seen him in over a year, sooner or later it's going to come out that you did time together. They'll be covering all angles."

"Hell, he did time with a lotta guys. Hundreds of 'em."

"Yeah, and the cops will look them all up, too. We can't take any chances on your being picked up. Not from now on in. So far this cipher is going like a dream. It's perfect. After hearing his kid's voice on that tape, Wilton will be knocking his brains out to get the dough. And he can get it, all right. All we got to do now is take it easy for another day, and then we start making the final arrangements."

Fats Morn nodded and leaned his head back against the seat. There was a strong body odor about the short, thickset man, and Dent edged to his own side. Physical uncleanliness always bothered Dent, and he frowned as his eyes briefly noted the spilled food on his companion's shiny blue serge coat, the frayed, dirty collar, and the stubble on his chin.

Morn was far from being the sort of person Dent would normally have chosen for company. But then again, he reflected, thieves were like beggars—they couldn't be choosers. And Fats Morn, in spite of his personal filthiness, was a valuable man on a job like this. He had plenty of guts and a sharp intelligence. He'd need them both in the next few days, once they made contact.

The train's whistle, far ahead, broke the night air sharply as the engineer gave a lonely warning for a blind highway crossing. The sound brought Fats Morn's face close to Dent's as he spoke.

"God, I'm hungry," he said. "Hope that damn dog got something to eat around the place."

"She's meeting us at the station," Dent said. "There'll be something to eat."

Fats nodded and again fell to dozing.

Fifteen minutes later the engineer began putting on his brakes to cut speed and the conductor opened the door at the other end of the car and put his head in.



"Land's End," he called. "Land's End coming up."

Dent began to pull himself together.

"Let's go," he said.

A moment later the train pulled to a noisy stop at the deserted station. A single electric bulb lit the freight platform as Morn and Dent dropped off the steps of the last car.

The town itself was dark but for the reflection of a few scattered lights some two blocks away in the center of the business district. The railway station was completely deserted.

As the train slowly began pulling out a moment later, Dent took his companion by the arm and walked toward the adjacent parking lot. Almost at once he noticed that it was vacant of cars.

"Damn it," he muttered, "Pearl's late." He stopped, threw his half-smoked cigarette on the ground, and stamped on it.

"So what do we do now?" Fats asked.

"We wait. She'll be along any second."

Dent was still swearing softly under his breath five minutes later when the twin headlights swung around the corner and cut a pattern across the station platform.

Instinctively both men rose to their feet, and as they did so they were silhouetted for a moment in the full glare of the powerful beams.

"That'll be Pearl now," Dent said, starting forward. Fats moved sluggishly after him.

The car turned and Dent could hear the brake linings grind as the driver put his foot on the pedal. And then, as the automobile slowed to a stop a few yards off, he saw his mistake.

Fats Morn saw it at the same time. The combination siren and spotlight on top of the sedan instantly identified it as a police patrol car. Fats' right hand sneaked for his shoulder holster and Dent barely had time

to step in front of the other man and mutter a quick warning when the voice reached them.

"You men waiting for someone?"

Quickly Dent nudged his companion, at the same time walking over to the car. "Just got in on the twelve-thirty," he said, his voice casual but his throat tight. "Supposed to be picked up, but I guess our party's a little late."

Jack Fanwell leaned out of the car as he turned on the overhead light. Dent recognized him at once.

"It's too late to get a cab tonight," he said.

"Maybe you better walk in town and phone."

"Oh, they'll be here, all right," Dent said. "She's always a little late."

For several moments the policeman sat there, and then he smiled.

"Where you gentlemen headed for?" he asked. "Maybe I can drop you off."

Fats began to say something, but again Dent quickly nudged him. There was no time for thinking; he had to make a quick decision. They couldn't stand here talking all night. Damn Pearl, why hadn't she shown? Instinctively Dent realized something must have gone wrong. But he had to say something. The cop was alone, he saw, and so he decided to take the gamble.

"We're going out to the beach to visit the Masons," he said. "Mrs. Mason was to pick us up, but I guess perhaps she thought we might take a cab, and got things mixed up. Her husband's been ill and . . ."

Fanwell scratched his head.

"Well," he said, "that's right. I understand Mr. Mason has been sick. I know the place, so why don't you climb in? I'll be glad to run you out. It's only a couple of miles and I'll spot her car if we pass her on the way."

Dent's mind was busy as he and Fats climbed into the back of the patrol car.

This could be a trap. On the other hand,

how could anything have gone wrong? No, it was much more likely that Red and Pearl had got drunk and passed out and Gino was afraid to leave the house alone while he drove in for them.

Damn Pearl and damn Red and damn the whole lousy bunch of them. Things like this could smash up the entire plan.

Fanwell kept up a steady stream of small talk as he drove. If this was a plant, he was certainly a great actor. But Dent couldn't believe it was a plant. There would have been a hundred cops around them by this time if anything had gone sour.

The moon had come up, and as the patrol car left the Montauk Highway and headed across the dunes, Dent was relieved to see the house in the distance. There were no strange cars around it.

There was a single bulb burning in one of the upstairs bedrooms, and the ground-floor windows showed slender ribbons of light at the sides of the heavy curtains.

Fanwell pulled up in front of the house and stopped.

"Saw you in town in the Masons' car last night," he said, turning to Dent. "Figured when I spotted you at the station that you must be staying out here." He smiled and nodded as Morn and Dent stepped to the ground.

"It was nice of you to give us the lift," Dent said. "Thanks."

Fanwell nodded again and put his car into gear.

Dent sighed with relief as the car drove off. He had been afraid that Fanwell would wait until they had knocked at the door. And Dent was worried sick about what he might find once that door opened. Quickly he walked to the small front porch and reached for the knob. Morn was directly behind him, breathing heavily, his hand back on the butt of the gun in his shoulder holster.

Dent knocked lightly.

A second later the doorway was a square of light. Red stood in the center of it, weaving slightly.

Wordlessly Dent pushed his way in, followed by his companion. Still without speaking, he turned and carefully closed the door. One smell of the stale, gin-laden air and one look at Red told him the man was more than half drunk.

"You fool," he said, the words tight between his bared teeth. "You're drunk. Where's Pearl? Where's Gino?" He reached out and grabbed the big man by his shirt. Morn carefully stepped in back of Red, his gun out now and grasped by the barrel.

"It's all right," Red said. "It's all right. Don't get all up in the air. Pearl's upstairs, passed out. She got drunk."

Red smiled with the inane self-confidence of a man who knows he's been drinking but is sure that he still has himself under control. He was afraid to leave and come in while Pearl's passed out.

"And Gino? Where's Gino? And the girl and the kid—are they all right?"

Dent spat out the questions, his voice tight with a controlled fury.

"The girl and the kid are O.K.," Red said. "They're sleepin'. Gino's upstairs in your room. He ain't well."

"What do you mean, he ain't well?" "I'll him," Red said, and again there was an idiotic smile on his face. "I kicked a couple of his ribs in an' messed him up."

Dent's face went white. "You kicked his ribs in? Goddamn it, Red, what's the matter with you? What the hell you and Gino been fighting about?"

"Well," Red said, and his normally good-natured face was ugly as he thought back, "he picked me the kid. The dirty little crumb, he jumped the kid. It's all right to do things to a grownup, but he ain't got no right doing something to a little girl like that."

Dent took his hand away from Red's shirt and stood back. He nodded to Morn, over the big man's shoulder, and Fats put his gun back in the shoulder holster and walked over to a chair and sat down.

"Listen, Red," Dent said. "Take it easy. Just tell me what happened. What did Gino do with the kid?"

"Well, I don't know what he was tryin' to do," Red said. "But the girl was in here washin' clothes and Gino sneaked in with the little girl. Next thing I knew she was screamin' and he was hurtin' her. I ain't gonna stand for nothin' like that. So I straightened him."

"O.K.," Dent said. "O.K. Where's Gino now?"

"Upstairs, like I said. Pearl's up there too, passed out. She came back after it happened and she got sore. She had a jug with her and she started drinking. She went up an' passed out about an hour ago."

Dent noticed the empty gin bottle on the table and he picked it up and shook it. He put it down again.

"Look, Red," he said. "Put some coffee on and get out something to eat for Fats. He's hungry. I'm going upstairs."

As Dent started for the staircase, Red turned to Fats Morn.

"What the hell you doin' out here, boy?" he asked.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The hands of the cheap alarm clock pointed to nine. Gino lay on the couch, his side wrapped in wide swathes of bandages. He wore only a pair of gray slacks and he stared at a spot over the mantelpiece, just above the clock. His mouth was partly concealed by strips of adhesive tape, which also covered most of his large nose.

Gino had lain there like a dead man for more than an hour. Only his eyes remained open and alive. He muttered now and then under his breath, but the others in the room ignored him.

Dent had sent Red to the barn to work on the Packard. The car was in perfect condition, but Dent knew that the big man was restless and unhappy unless he was doing something with his hands, so he'd suggested that Red wash the car down. Red was glad to get away from the house for a while. He had a bad hangover and he felt nervous in the same room with Gino.

Fats Morn sat at the card table in front of the fireplace, where a handful of small logs threw off a feeble heat. Occasionally he stood up to twist the dial of the portable radio.

Dent was stripped to the waist in front of the kitchen sink, shaving. Pearl, sitting opposite Fats, watched Dent, and there was a willful, stubborn expression on her face.

"Look, Cal," she said. "I'm sorry. I know I shouldn't have got tight. But good God, I'm beginning to get a little crazy around this place. And then coming back and finding Red and Gino trying to kill each other—well, I . . ."

"Getting slopped is no answer," Dent said. "I said I'm sorry. I won't do it again."

"O.K.," Dent said. "Forget it. But for God's sake, remember we're shooting for a bald million bucks. We're trying something new one else has ever tried before. If we're going to pull it, we gotta be smart. I know Red is stupid, but I expect you to handle yourself."

He hesitated and then said, "Red said you had a jug with you when you came back last night."

"Red's nuts," Pearl said. "I had a case of beer. But Red had two quarts of gin stashed upstairs. He was all excited after battling Gino around and went up and got it."

"Is there any more hidden away?"

"Not that I know of. But you know Red. If he's got any more, he certainly isn't telling us about it."

Dent rinsed off his razor and carefully folded it. He washed his face in cold water and then dried himself on the towel next to the sink. Turning, he reached for the shirt hanging on the back of a kitchen chair and pulled it over his shoulders.

"Go in and get the morning papers," he said, "but be careful. I don't like the idea of that local cop being out here yesterday. And it was a tough break his picking Fats and me up last night. You better sort of let it be known around town that we're friends of your husband. Drop something about our being out here on a business deal. But be careful."

Pearl nodded and took her bag from the table as she left the room. She stopped at the door for a moment.

"You're not sore any more, are you, Cal?" she asked.

"I'm not sore."

Fats waited until the door closed behind her and then stood up. He walked over by the couch and looked down at Gino. "How you feeling, boy?"

Gino looked at him for a moment blankly and then spoke between cracked lips.

"I'll kill that crumb! I'm going to kill him."

Dent swung around. "It's all over now," he said. "Forget it. The hell with Red. Listen, we're in the middle of a five-hundred-thousand-dollar caper, and you and Red have to fight. Forget it."

Gino turned, groaning, to the wall.

Fats shrugged his heavy shoulders and sat down.

"Cal," he said, "don't you think five hundred thousand was too much? What makes you think . . ."

"Look," Dent said. "Use your head. We've been all over that before. The Wiltons have millions. He inherited six million from his old man. You read about it in the papers. It's his only kid. What the hell you think he's going to do? Place a price on the kid? You think he'd pay three hundred thousand, but balk at five?"

"Yeah, but getting five, in cash . . ."

"A guy with six million can do it. He's got friends. He can do it. Damn it, that's what's always been the trouble with punks who tried this racket before. They couldn't think in big terms. Do you think Lindbergh wouldn't have given a million as quick as he would seventy thousand to have got his kid back? Of course he would. This deal will either work or it won't. So we might just as well make a killing if it does."

Fats grunted and reached for a pack of cigarettes lying on the table in front of him.

"I hope you're right," he said.

Gino squirmed on the couch and turned toward the room.

"I'm freezing," he said, his voice thin and weak.

Dent nodded his head at Fats, who left the room and a few minutes later returned with a blanket from one of the upstairs bedrooms. He tossed it over the injured man.

It was almost ten-thirty and Dent had turned the radio to WNEW when he heard the car return. Pearl left the Packard in front of the house. She entered, her arms full. A faint snow came from a basket she held in her arms.

"What the hell is that?" Fats asked, looking up sharply.

"A cat," Pearl smiled. "The grocer's cat had kittens and he gave me one."

"What do you want—"

"Look. He offered me a kitten. Said it would be a good mouster and that all these old houses have told mice when it got cold in the fall. So I took it."

Dent nodded. "You did right," he said.

"Take it in and give it to the kid to play with. That'll give her something to do."

Pearl tossed the newspapers to Dent and started for the back room.

"Brother, wait till you see them," she said.

Quickly Dent spread the front sheet of the Times on the table and Fats moved across the room to read it over his shoulder.

The story was played up in heavy type, spread over the four right-hand columns at the top of the front page.

KIDNAPERS MAKE CONTACT
Dent skipped the subheads and began reading the newspaper's account.

Kidnapers of seven-year-old Jane Wilton are known to have twice made contact with Gregory Wilton, wealthy Riverside, Connecticut, broker and father of the missing child, it was revealed early last evening by Col. W. F. Newbold, of the Connecticut State Police.

For the first time it has been definitely established that a kidnap note was left at the home of the child some few minutes before she was carried off, along with her nurse, Miss Terry Ballin. Early yesterday morning, some twenty-four hours after the child had been abducted, a phone call was made to Mr. Wilton at his lower Manhattan office, and a tape recording of the child's voice was played over the telephone, thus assuring the family for the first time that the child was still alive.

Police have revealed that a second telephone call was made to the family home in Riverside last evening and that a demand was made for five-hundred-thousand dollars. FBI men and state police officials have refused to verify the actual conversation. It is believed that the second telephone call was made from a pay station in the Grand Central area.

Stanislaus Lazarus, arrested yesterday for questioning in connection with the crime, is being held on a short affidavit and officials refused to divulge what his possible connection with the case may be. However, it is believed that the first telephone conversation was made from his apartment in Manhattan.

Morris J. S. Gordon, senior member of the well-known law firm of Gordon, Blasingame and Golden, representing the Wilton family, has made a special plea that police and government officials give the family complete freedom to negotiate with the kidnapers.

"A crime has been committed," he said, "but at this point the safety of the Wilton child is infinitely more important than the apprehension of the criminals."

Every effort, it is understood, is being made to leave a free way open for the kidnapers to satisfy their demands so that the youngster may be safely returned to her family.

It is believed . . .

Dent pushed the paper away.

"Nothing here that wasn't on the air," he said.

Fats, still looking at the newspaper, suddenly laughed.

"Hey," he said, "this is hot. The Times says Buggy Moretti, notorious leader of the underworld—yeah, that's what they call Buggy—they say he has assured police officials that the crime is done by a bunch of amateurs and that no professional criminals would touch kidnaping. He has also offered to help the cops."

Dent smiled thinly. "That louse couldn't help himself," he said.

Fats continued, "Not only that, but everybody is getting into the act. Some professor

up at Columbia—he's supposed to be a crime expert—thinks that because of the half-million-dollar ransom demand, the whole thing is an international plot."

"The more screwballs get mixed up in this," Dent said, "the better all around. The main thing is the cops are being called off for the time being. Not that you can believe that, though. Only thing is, they'll probably give Wilton a free hand for the next day or so."

"What's probably got 'em baffled is telling Wilton to get the money any way he wants," Fats said. "They must think we're nuts."

"No," Dent said, "you can bet the FBI has got it figured out. They probably have a fair idea of how we're going to work it. Only thing is, they won't be able to do anything about it. The heat's on, all right, but right now they're worrying most about the kid. As long as they figure she's still alive, we're safe. By tomorrow this thing will really be hot."

Fats nodded.

"I'm going up and catch some sleep," he said. "If Red's going to drive me in town tonight, he better get some too."

Dent walked to the rear of the room, and as he passed the front windows he pulled aside the curtain and looked across the sands toward the ocean.

Far down the beach he saw the outlines of a man standing knee deep in the surf and casting a line into the water.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Janie Wilton lay on her stomach on the floor in the middle of the room, playing with the kitten. She had tied a long piece of string around a twist of paper and was pulling it across the linoleum in little jerks as the kitten daintily batted it with a furry paw. The child was laughing.

The novelty of the sudden change in her life fascinated her and, like all children, she had been quick to readjust herself to a new environment. Already she had forgotten her experience with Gino. She hadn't actually been injured, and she felt about him as she would have felt about a strange dog that might have bitten her for no reason. Once out of her sight, he was out of her mind.

When Dent entered the room, she looked up quickly. And then, a second later, she smiled shyly and went back to playing.

Pearl sat on one of the cots and watched. Standing near the darkened windows was Terry Ballin, who also watched the youngster, a half-smile on her face.

Dent stood quietly in the door for several moments, his eyes on the two girls. They must be, he reflected, about the same age. He was at once struck by the sharp contrast between them. They were almost of a height, although Terry could have been about an inch the taller. Both were slender, well formed, good-looking. But there the similarity ended.

The dark smudges under Pearl's large, widely spaced eyes gave her an old, worn look that was probably intensified by the cigarette she carried listlessly in one corner of her large, perfectly formed mouth. Even the languid way in which she held her perfectly proportioned body seemed to emphasize the overwhelming sensuality of her peculiarly exuberant physical personality. She looked exactly like what she was—a full-blown woman of wide experience.

Pearl was the type of woman Dent had known most of his life. He understood her through and through. Born and brought up on the streets of a tough neighborhood in a tough city, girls like Pearl matured early and usually gained their first experience with men while they were still in their teens.

Dent had known many such girls, but few

as attractive as Pearl. Cal Dent was that unusual sort of man—the sort who can be found fairly often among ex-cons—who could take his sex or leave it. Pearl attracted him, it is true, but there was nothing exclusive or personal in the attraction. To Dent, she was merely another woman, to be had or not to be had, according to the circumstances of the moment.

The man was able to put aside all thoughts of women, irrespective of their proximity, during those times when he was immersed in a job. The fact that at this time he was in the middle of the biggest thing in his life precluded any possibility of his taking more than a purely academic interest in her.

There was another thing about Dent. Knowing instinctively that Pearl, like all the others like her, was always available, he himself was emotionally immune to any deep attachment or romantic illusion. With a girl like Pearl, Dent could spend a night or a week or even several years. But once he was ready to leave, he would go without regret.

As his eyes left Pearl and went to Terry Ballin, Dent was suddenly conscious of the vast channel of difference that separated the two.

Terry, in spite of her soft, high-breasted body and the almost overpowering physical appeal of her rounded arms and legs, had about her much of the impersonal, casual charm of a child. Looking at her, Dent found himself wondering what kind of woman she was. Whom had she known? What had she done? There was the typical candor of a young girl in her brown-flecked eyes. Vibrantly alive, she gave the impression that she was still psychologically unprepared to meet life as a mature, full-grown woman.

There was a brightness, an old Celtic alert intelligence about her expression, but it was basically the expression of an inquisitive, inexperienced schoolgirl. She was the kind of girl of whom Dent had known very little.

Watching her, as she in turn smiled down at the child and the kitten, Dent found her strangely attractive. He was baffled to experience one of the very few soft, almost sentimental situations he had had in years.

He quickly caught himself up short and his face was a hard, neutral mask as he turned back to Pearl.

"Take the kid out in the other room and give her some lunch," he said shortly. "I want to talk."

Both girls started toward Janie and again Dent spoke.

"I mean for you to take her," he said, nodding at Pearl. "You," and he pointed at Terry, who smiled at him with a strangely ungrateful, curious expression, "stay here."

There was a sulky line around Pearl's mouth as she took the child's hand and started for the door. Janie hung back, but Terry nodded for her to obey and a second later the door closed behind the two of them.

Dent walked slowly over to the rocking chair and sat down. He took a crumpled pack of cigarettes from his pocket and extracted one. As he was about to light it, he seemed suddenly to remember the girl, and he held the pack toward her.

Terry shook her head. "No, thank you." "You don't smoke?" Dent asked, the tone of the question showing a complete lack of interest in an answer.

"I smoke," Terry said. "Dent's gray eyes looked slowly to her face. "You smoke, but no mine—is that it?"

Again Terry shook her head. "No," she said, "only I don't feel like smoking just now. I guess I'm too . . ."

"You don't have to be nervous with me," Dent said. "I'm not here to hurt you."

"If I'm not going to be hurt," the girl said, "why am I here? Why did you take me?"

Dent shrugged. "You were with the kid."

he said simply. "So we had to take you. Didn't want you broadcasting our descriptions."

For a moment Terry looked at him thoughtfully. And then, when she spoke, her voice had a soft huskiness.

"But after," she said. "How about after? Do you suppose I won't? as you say, broadcast your descriptions?"

For a moment Dent looked at her sharply, as though the idea had occurred to him for the first time. Then he shrugged.

"When it's all over," he said, "it won't matter. Description or no description, once I have the money, I'll be well on my way."

Suddenly Terry Ballin lost that peculiarly childlike expression and her eyes were filled with anger. Her face flushed.

"No," she said. "No. I know about your kind of man. You'd as soon kill as not. You, and those others in there, you're all of you alike. All of you cowards and killers. No, you haven't the slightest intention of turning me loose. I'll be lucky if, once you get the money, you let the child go."

As the girl spoke, her voice filled with bitterness and loathing. Dent looked at her in quick surprise. It was hard to realize she was capable of so much sudden feeling.

Without stopping to get her breath, Terry continued. She no longer stood still, but walked quickly back and forth as she talked.

"Yes, I've known men like you before. Back home in the slum where I was raised. I guess your kind are all over. All you want is money, and you don't care what you do to get it. You rob and steal and kill. You'll be content, aware that the girl's voice had risen until she was almost screaming, jumped to his feet. He reached out and grabbed her by both arms and quickly shook her.

"All right," he said. "That'll be enough of that. Now quiet down. I told you to keep your voice quiet. What do you want me to have to do to you?"

The minute he touched her, Terry suddenly stopped talking. She didn't struggle as he held her and her eyes were wide as she looked into his face. They stood there motionless for several seconds.

"Sit down," Dent said then, and he dropped her arms. "I don't want to hurt you, but I can't have you yelling in here. I don't know what we'll do with you, right now. All I can say is, be quiet and do what you're told and I'll see you're not hurt for the time being."

The words came from his mouth almost automatically, and as Terry fell back on the cot, her head went back so that her auburn hair fell far down over her square shoulders and her arms dropped straight to support herself. Dent saw her for the first time as a woman. Up until that moment she had been merely a cypher—another pawn in his gamble, and a not too important one. As he watched her breathing heavily and attempting to regain control of herself, he suddenly realized that he actually never had considered the girl. He had automatically accepted the idea of her eventual murder.

From the very beginning, when he had first planned the crime, and even before he had recruited the others to help him, he knew that the kidnapping would be the final, the supreme gesture of his career. He was fully aware of the impact the crime would have on the public, fully aware that with his record, he could expect to get the chair if he were captured. He had been prepared to go all out, and all out he intended murder if that were to prove necessary.

Up until that very moment, murder had seemed to him merely a technical probability—one that he had not considered in relation to any person in particular. Certainly, from the very beginning he had planned the kidnapping with the full intention of eventually returning the child un-

harmful. Hardened as he was, he would have been incapable of cold-bloodedly planning the killing of a child for money. But kidnapping he could and did plan.

And now it seemed that he was being faced with a circumstance that he had utterly failed to consider. He had, of course, known all along that the girl would have to be taken at the same time the child was snatched. And in his subconscious, he realized the potential danger in turning her free once the ransom was collected.

The possibility of murder as such failed to upset his peculiar, twisted consciousness. If, in the past, he had had to kill in the consummation of a crime—well, he had looked at it impersonally, as a part of the risk he took in being a professional criminal. But this was, somehow, something different. He felt, watching the girl, strangely upset.

"Look," he said, "I have nothing against you personally." And then, as he realized what he had said, he was more than ever surprised. He walked over to Terry and again held out the pack of cigarettes.

"Better take one," he said. Terry stared at him as she reached for a cigarette.

"I'd like some coffee," she said. And then she added slowly, "You aren't like those others in there, are you? What makes a man like you?"

"Never mind a man like me," Dent interrupted her, his voice harsh and forbidding. "Never mind about me. Just see you don't make any trouble. I'll send Pearl in with the kid and have her bring you some coffee."

He turned on his heel and left the room.

A few minutes later the child was once more playing on the floor with the kitten. Terry's cigarette had burned down almost to her fingers and she sat with the coffee cup in her hand staring at the floor with an odd, almost blank expression on her face. Suddenly she realized Janie was trying to attract her attention.

She shook her head to clear it and automatically smiled at the youngster.

"What, honey?" she asked. "They're funny people, Terry. Aren't they funny people?" Janie said. "Why do they always seem so mad about everything?"

Terry did what she always did when the child seemed upset. At once she submerged her own feelings and her own fears.

"Why, baby," she said, "of course they're funny. Don't you see, honey, it's like in a game? You know, like playing cops and robbers. But you don't want to be afraid of them. They gave you that nice kitty, now, didn't they?"

Janie looked at her for a second, her eyes wide and serious. Then she smiled and nodded.

"Yes," she said, "they did bring the kitty. But do Daddy and Mamma know it's a game?"

"That's right, honey," Terry said. "Sure they know it's a game. And pretty soon Daddy will bring a lot of money to pay for the kitty and then you can go home and the game will be all over."

"And will I win?" Janie asked.

"You'll win, honey."

CHAPTER NINE

After returning to the living room of the hideout and telling Pearl to take some coffee to the girl, Dent walked over to Gino and asked how he felt.

Gino looked up at him dumbly for a minute. When he spoke, his voice was a thin whisper.

"I'm sick," he said. "That rat tried to kill me. I should have a doctor."

"You'll be all right in another day or two,"

Dent replied. "Just take it easy as you can."

He turned to Fats, who, after tossing restlessly for an hour in the upstairs bedroom, had found that sleep escaped him and had returned to the living room.

"I think," he said, "we better postpone your going into town until tomorrow. I hope this don't set us back with our plans, but we gotta have Gino on his feet when the payoff is made. We can't take no chances on him being laid up."

Fats nodded. "Why not have Red or Pearl take me in today anyway?" he said.

"It's better you stay under cover," Dent said. "Stay around tonight and Pearl can drive you in early tomorrow morning. You better get some rest."

"I can't sleep in the daytime," Morn said. "I'll just sit here and read the scratch sheet to Gino."

"O.K.," Dent said. "Watch things. I'm going upstairs and hit the sack for a couple of hours. Anything breaks on the radio, let me know at once. And keep an eye on that guy fishing down on the beach. I can't tell from here, but I think it's that cop who drove us out last night."

Fats Morn nodded and unfolded the paper to the racing section as Dent turned and started up the stairs.

He was lying flat on his back, his hands under his head and staring up at the ceiling, when Pearl entered the bedroom. He had stripped to his shorts and lay on top of the blanket, a small kerosene stove in the corner keeping him warm. The shades were drawn and the room was dim.

Pearl entered without knocking. She saw Dent lying there and wasn't sure whether or not he was sleeping. Quietly she turned and closed the door.

"You awake, Cal?" she asked in a whisper. "I'm awake."

Pearl walked to the side of the bed and sat next to him. She took out a pack of cigarettes and lighted two of them, handing him one.

"Where's Red?" she asked. "He's still out in the barn," Pearl said. "Decided to do a grease job on the car after I told him we changed plans."

Dent nodded.

"I got tired of listening to those two downstairs," Pearl said. "My God, how crazy can you get? They sit there doping horses and neither one's got a dime down on a race or any way of getting one down."

Dent laughed thinly. "That's horse players for you," he said. "They just like to lose, whether they get a bet or not."

"Well, I can't take much more of them," Pearl said. "That little louse Gino is bad enough, but at least he don't smell. The other one—well, I just can't stand the way he keeps looking at me. What's wrong with him, anyway? My God, the way he looks at a girl, you'd think at least he'd take a bath and clean himself up once in a while. What's wrong with him, anyway?"

"He just looks," Dent said. "That's his trouble, he can't do anything but look."

"Well," Pearl said, "they sure make a good pair. Him and Gino. Gino can't do anything except beat 'em to death. Where'd you ever dig those two up, anyway?"

"For this job they're good," Dent said, his voice short. "This isn't a tea party. They're all right."

"They may be all right, but I'd like somebody else to talk to once in a while."

"Talk to me," Dent said.

Pearl reached over and took Dent's cigarette from his hand. She stood up, crossed the room, and reached down to sniff out both cigarettes in a tin ash tray. Then she came back once more and sat next to Dent so that he could feel the warmth of her body against his side.

"O.K. I'll talk to you. What about the girl?"

"What about her?" Dent said.
 "What do we do with her when we leave here? My God, you can't just let her go. She'll blab everything she knows and—"

"So will the kid," Dent said.
 "Yes, but the kid's different. They'll pump the kid, of course, but she's only a baby, really, and she won't be able to tell 'em too much. But that girl's something else."

Dent didn't answer for several minutes. Finally he turned and half sat up, pulling his knees under him so that he faced the girl.

"I don't know," he said. "Once this is all over and we get the dough, we're going to be as hot as pistols in any case. As far as I'm concerned, I'll be out of the country in nothing flat. I'm not worried about making a clean getaway."

"That's all right for you," Pearl said, "but how about the others? Take Red, for instance. You know how stupid he is. Sooner or later they'll pick him up."

"Well, if they do," Dent said, "you won't be with him."

Pearl nodded. "Yeah, but once they get him, or Gino or Fats, it's going to make it a lot easier to get you and me."

"Sure," Dent said. "But it's six of one and half a dozen of the other. Kill the girl or the kid and they'll be looking for us a lot harder than they will if it's just a case of money—money they know they'll never be able to trace."

Pearl reached over and her hand caressed Dent's arm.

"Dent," she said, "you're not going soft on that babe, are you?"

"Don't be a fool," Dent snapped. "I'm not going soft on anybody. You should know that. It's only what makes sense."

"Yeah, but once they got you for kidnaping, they got you for the works anyway."

"The point is," Dent said, "they aren't going to get me in the first place. That's why I don't want them looking any harder than they have to. The kid gets back safe, and the girl isn't hurt, and maybe they'll forget about it sometime. Kill somebody and they'll never give up."

Pearl smiled for several seconds. "How about Gino and Fats?" she said at last. "You think they're going to stand by while you let the girl go free?"

"I didn't say I'd let the girl go, and I'll take care of Gino and Fats."

"You take care of everybody," Pearl said. She leaned close to Dent and the hand that was stroking his arm reached up and pulled his head close to her own. "Why don't you take care of me, too?"

Her soft mouth was less than a few inches from his as she spoke.

Dent, with unaccustomed gentleness, pushed her away.

"I'll take care of you," he said. "But not now. Good God, we can't have any more trouble. Red be—"

Pearl suddenly pushed him hard and started to get up.

"Red, nuts!" she said, her voice harsh in anger. "It's that babe downstairs you're thinking about. I could tell the way you—"

She stopped as suddenly as she had started.

Dent was on his feet in a second. One arm went out and circled her waist and he pulled her to him. His hand covered her mouth.

"Shut up," he said. "Shut up. You don't know what you're talking about."

His lips found her mouth as his hand buried itself in her hair and he held her head hard to him. Pearl's arms went around his waist as she pressed against him.

And then, a moment later, Dent pushed the girl away.

"All right," he said. "Get out of here now. Get out while you can. There'll be plenty of time for us once we get this job over. In the meantime, be sensible. I gotta have someone around I can count on."



"No, we don't have Esther Williams!"

Pearl smiled as she quietly left the room and started downstairs.

Dent lay back on the bed and his eyes stared blankly at the ceiling. He breathed heavily. But he wasn't thinking of Pearl. He was thinking of the girl downstairs, the girl with the flame-colored hair.

CHAPTER TEN

The rain started shortly after three o'clock on Thursday morning. It began, without the fanfare of thunder or lightning, as a soft shower that pattered like the tiny feet of a hundred kittens on the roof of the cottage. And then, about four o'clock, the skies began to rumble and lightning flashed intermittently, illuminating the dingy interior of the hideout. The wind steadily increased until it reached almost hurricane proportions.

The tar-paper roofing, which had been used as a matter of economy when the place was first built, failed to keep out the gushing water, and within minutes after the first fury of the sudden storm, both bedrooms upstairs were leaking badly.

Red refused to get up when Pearl shook him awake, and so she pulled herself out of bed and went downstairs, where it was still fairly dry. Gino and Fats were sharing the other bedroom, and the two of them groaned in their sleep but did not wake up, in spite of the rain-soaked blankets.

Dent had been lying on the couch, half awake, when the rain first started. By the time Pearl came down, he was up and had a pot of coffee on the stove. As the wind gradually increased and the violence of the storm began to manifest itself, he experienced a sense of uneasiness. He wondered if they were in for several days of it. If so, it would be bad, but at least it would keep

people away from the beach and the dunes.

He heard movement in the room behind the locked door and went over and listened carefully for a few seconds.

He knocked, and then, not waiting for an answer, asked if the roof was leaking.

Terry answered that it was, but that she had moved the cots. She said they were all right.

He was back at the stove and ready to pour coffee when Pearl came into the room.

"My God," Pearl said, "this place!"

She walked to one of the front windows and pulled the curtain to one side. Sheets of water ran down the pane, giving it an odd mirror-like effect. The wind whistling around the sides of the clapboard shanty seemed to threaten to tear the place apart. A sudden flash of lightning made the scene outside momentarily as bright as day.

"It may be sand to you," Pearl said, "but it looks like a lake of mud to me. I'll probably have a time getting the car out."

Dent nodded.

"Yeah, but she'll pull through that stuff all right. Only thing is, instead of taking Fats all the way in this morning, I think you better drop him off at Smithtown. I don't like the idea of being stuck here with only that other car—in case anything happens."

"What do you mean, in case anything happens?" Pearl asked. "I thought you said nothing could happen."

"Things can always happen. This weather keeps up, it may bust into our plans. I don't think a plane could get up on a day like this."

"So what about Wilton?" Pearl asked.

"He waits."

"Wait, yeah," Pearl said. "I'm getting tired of waiting. A couple of more days like this and I'll be blowing my top."

"Take it easy," Dent said. "Sit down and have some coffee. Don't start getting jittery at this stage of the game. Everything has been going fine up to this point. The weather

is a break, in one way. Keeps people indoors. And I had a radio report just before you came down. It's expected to clear sometime late this evening."

Pearl pulled her dressing gown closer around herself and stood with her back to the fireplace. She coughed a little as the wood smoke now and then escaped into the room. Her eyes were red and smarting.

Dent handed her a cup of coffee and pulled up two straight-backed chairs.

"The kid's awake in the next room," he said. "You wanna take her in a cup?"

"The hell with her," Pearl said.

Dent shrugged and put his own cup to his lips.

At seven, as Dent was twisting the dial to cut into an early news program, Fats staggered downstairs.

"What a dump!"

"Coffee?" Dent asked.

Fats nodded and slouched over to the fireplace.

Dent waited until he had the coffee in his hand before he started talking.

"Got a weather report a few minutes ago," he said. "Looks like this is going to keep up."

Fats walked over and tried to look out of the window.

"Won't no planes get up in this," he said.

Dent nodded. "That's what I figure. She may clear by afternoon, but hell, that's taking a chance. I think we better postpone everything until tomorrow."

"So what do I do?" Fats asked. "Hang around here all day?"

Dent shook his head.

"No," he said. "I think you better go on in anyway. Only don't go into New York tonight. Get off in Jamaica and take a train to Brooklyn. Stay there overnight and then go to New York in the morning. Get there by nine-thirty and make your call at ten. In a way, this will work out better, anyhow. You got more time. All you have to do is be careful and keep out of trouble."

"And how about tomorrow," Fats asked.

"Suppose the weather stays like this?"

"Dent won't," Dent said. "It's supposed to clear tonight. But if worst comes to worst, we just postpone another day."

"And how will you know? How will you know if Wilton..."

Dent shrugged. "If you aren't back here tomorrow afternoon by four, we'll know."

Fats walked to the couch and fell on it heavily. "And I handle it exactly the same way tomorrow, then?" he said. "The same way, right?"

"Right," Dent said. "You got everything straight now?" Fats nodded.

"We better go over it in any case. Tell me again exactly what you do, just so there won't be any hitches."

Fats grunted. "I got it all straight."

"It won't hurt to be sure," Dent said.

The round little man looked sour. "All right," he said. "I go to the messenger service in Penn Station. I give 'em the two letters and pay them to deliver them at once. And then, at ten o'clock, I make the telephone call. Once I got Wilton on the wire, I ask him if he's got the money. He says he has and then I tell him to duck the cops, grab a cab, and go to the Waldorf and pick up a letter at the desk addressed to G. H. McGuire. I hang up."

Dent shook his head.

"Damn it Fats, that's what I mean. You're forgetting something. You gotta do this perfect. You can't screw it up at all, or the whole thing flops."

Fats looked at him silently for a moment, his eyes expressionless.

"You have to identify yourself," Dent said.

"That's right. I tell him the kid's Teddy bear is named Puggsy."

Dent nodded.

"And the bags?"

"Yeah, I tell him to buy two suitcases on his way to the hotel."

Pearl looked up.

"You really think he won't be followed?" she asked.

"It's a toss-up," Dent said. "A chance we got to take. What I'm counting on is the fact they'll want to get the kid back more than anything else. And I don't think that even the FBI is going to risk something going sour until the direct contact is made. In any case, if he is followed, the switch at the airfield will throw them off."

"They'll leave him alone," Fats said.

"They'll figure to mark the dough and that will be enough for a tracer."

Dent's hands nervously played with a pack of cigarettes. "You gotta impress on him that he must follow the instructions in the letter. Follow 'em perfectly. That he will be watched. And you can't be on that phone for more than a minute and a half."

"Don't worry. I'm taking no chances."

"Look," Pearl again interrupted. "Why wouldn't it be better for Fats to actually talk him?"

"I want Fats back here in plenty of time," Dent said. "Anyway, what difference will it make? We have to take the chance that he'll play ball. If the cops do follow him, you can bet that they'll be so damn cagey we'll never spot 'em anyway."

"He'll play ball," Fats said.

"O.K. then," said Dent. "Here are the letters."

He took two envelopes from the jacket pocket of his coat. From the one addressed to G. H. McGuire and marked "To be called for," he extracted a single typewritten sheet of paper. Carefully he laid it on the table and reread it. Pearl walked over and stood behind him, reading it over his shoulder.

Dent had a pencil in his hand.

"It's now just before noon, Thursday morning," Dent read.

He took the pencil and carefully crossed out the word "Thursday" and substituted "Friday." Then he went over the rest of the note:

You have the money with you, probably in large bills that you have undoubtedly listed. Without telephoning anyone or making any attempt to contact the police or FBI, you will at once go to the corner of Fifth Avenue and Forty-fourth street. You will find that there are banks on all four corners. Start with the Fifth Avenue Bank, on the northwest corner, and work around.

Go into the bank, ask for the manager, and when you get him, identify yourself. If he doesn't know you already, with the publicity you have been getting, he will at least know who you are. Tell him that what you have to do must be done immediately and that any attempt on his part not to co-operate, or to contact police, will endanger the life of your child.

And then have him change one hundred thousand dollars of the money you are carrying into small bills. Do this in all four banks, and then go to the National City Bank at the corner of Fifth and Forty-third and change the last hundred thousand. You will be under observation during this time and you will be allowed exactly twenty minutes in each bank. Exchange the money so that the bulk of it is in five-, ten-, and twenty-dollar bills. We will accept no more than one-third of it in fifties and hundreds.

Any attempt on your part to have these new bills marked or the numbers registered will be fatal. It is up to you to see that the bank officials keep the entire transaction confidential. Any slip-up and we will drop contact at once.

Your daughter's future rests entirely in your hands.

As soon as you have finished changing the money, take a taxi and go to Teterboro Airport. Ask for a Mr. James Dunleavy, part of a private charter plane.

Dunleavy will have received a letter of instructions prior to your arrival. Tell him you are G. H. McGuire and are ready to take off. Say nothing beyond this and board the plane at once. When you arrive at your destination, you will receive further instructions.

Dent looked back over his shoulder and saw that the girl was through reading. Carefully he folded the sheet and reinserted it in the envelope.

"Did you watch your prints on that?" Pearl asked.

"Enough," Dent said. "It isn't as easy as you think to get prints off a paper."

"You should cut out words from a newspaper," Fats said.

"Nuts," Dent said as he pulled the second letter out of his unsealed envelope.

"Well, they traced the typewriter in the Leopold-Loeb case," Fats said.

Dent looked at him coldly.

"Every time some smart operator starts to get fancy, cutting out letters and so forth, he gives the cops just so much more to go on. I like these things simple. I bought a second-hand typewriter. I've written several letters on it. When we get through with it, I'll dump it in a hock-shop. There isn't one chance in a million it will ever be traced. I still think the simple way is the best."

He laid the second letter on the table. It was addressed to James Dunleavy, Teterboro Airport, Teterboro, New Jersey. Once more Pearl looked over his shoulder as he read it.

Enclosed are five one-hundred-dollar bills [she read]. Soon after you get this, I shall arrive at the airport.

My name is G. H. McGuire. Be prepared to take off at once. I am to be flown to the airport just northeast of Smithtown, L. I. The five hundred is to pay you for the trip and to pay you to keep your mouth closed about it. When I get to Teterboro, I shall look you up and tell you my name. Beyond that there will be no need for conversation.

"This guy Dunleavy—" Pearl began.

"Yeah," Fats interrupted. "How the hell you know he's going to go for the deal? What makes you think that five hundred will convince him? And how can you be sure he won't be out on another job anyway?"

"Look," Dent said, disgust in his voice.

"How long do you think I been planning this thing, anyway? I told you I had all the angles covered. I know Dunleavy like I know the back of my hand. Didn't I run business with him out of Miami once? Hell, he'd kill his mother for five bills—and keep quiet about it. And I already sent him another five hundred, several days back, telling him to keep the last four days of this week open for a job that would be coming in. I know the guy and I know what he can do."

"You know him so well," Fats said, "how come he isn't in on the job, then?"

"Because," Dent said, speaking as though he were explaining something to a child, "he isn't the kind of guy who would ever go for a caper like this. But for a fast buck, he'd fly anyone anywhere, no questions asked."

"I hope you're right," Fats said.

Dent again folded the sheet of paper and put it back in the envelope.

"Be damn sure your messenger gets the letters out in plenty of time. Give 'em something extra. And you don't need to worry about this end of it. We'll have Wilton paid, under the name of McGuire, at the time he

lands, and he'll get the rest of his instructions then. Just be sure to get here as quick as you can. When you get off the train, take a cab out."

Fats nodded. He reached for the two envelopes. "Well, I better get started," he said. Pearl went back upstairs and got a slicker and her bag. Five minutes later, Dent watched through the window as the car pulled away from the house.

Silently Dent congratulated himself for not having taken the others in on his final arrangements with Dentlessy. They didn't know anything about the deal he had made with the pilot to land on the beach and pick him up, and Dunleavy himself was in the dark about the snatch.

Playing both ends against the middle was dangerous, but in the long run it would prove the best policy. Dent's secrecy wasn't designed to double-cross anyone; it was designed strictly as a personal insurance policy. He started upstairs to get Red and Gino. The storm seemed to have increased in intensity, and subconsciously he was aware of the heavy static on the air, which made it almost impossible to hear the radio.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Fats waited until they had left the house far behind them before he started to talk.

"Dent trusts too much to luck," he said. "For a moment Pearl didn't answer. She had known Fats Morn for less than a month. What she had seen of him she hadn't liked."

A stocky, truncated figure of a man with a completely bald head overshadowing tiny, reddish eyes with pure-white lashes, Fats Morn looked fifteen years older than he actually was. He had a flabby, loose mouth and a livid, pock-marked skin. His clothes were shabby and unpressed, his white shirt frayed and dirty. There was invariably the stench of stale perspiration about him.

Fats stuttered slightly and his eyes were very nearsighted. He refused to wear glasses. He coughed incessantly, without bothering to cover his mouth.

But if he was physically unimpressive, there was nothing wrong with his mentality. He had a reputation for being a clearheaded man in a pinch, as well as being tight-lipped. He was also, in spite of his obesity and poor vision, an excellent man with a gun. He loved money, but unfortunately he loved gambling more. As a result he was always broke.

The windows of the car were raised to keep out the rain, and Pearl unconsciously moved as far from her companion as she could. The air in the closed vehicle was stale and she was anxious to get to the station.

"The trouble with Dent," Fats went on, "is he wants too much. He should have asked for a couple of hundred thousand, not five."

Pearl kept her eyes on the road when she answered.

"Five is better. We all get more that way." "More?" Fats' voice was a husky wheeze as he spoke. "Dent gets more, you mean. Look at the split he's handing out. He takes two hundred and fifty of it, and we split the rest. What kind of a deal is that?"

"It was Dent's idea," Pearl said. "And he put up the dough to finance it."

Fats shrugged. "What dough? A lousy couple of grand."

Pearl didn't answer, and the fat man continued.

"No," he said. "It ain't a good split. Hell, look at the chances we're taking. Red and Gino had to make the snatch. I gotta do the contact work. I think we should get a better break."

Pearl suddenly knew that Fats was feeling her out, trying to find whose side she'd be on

in case of a break-up at the end. She decided to play along.

"Things aren't going too smooth, anyway," Fats continued. "That brawl between Red and Gino. You know Red hurt him pretty bad, and Gino isn't going to forget it. Sooner or later, when Red ain't watching, he's gonna get him."

"Red can take care of himself," Pearl said. "Anyway, let 'em kill each other. Who cares?"

Fats looked at the girl sharply. "Don't you care?"

Pearl shrugged. "Red ain't the only guy in the world," she said. "Anyway, once this thing is over, I won't need Red any more."

"That's one reason a bigger split could come in handy," Fats said. "Another thing, if Red and Gino tangle again and somebody really gets it, that'll make one less to take care of."

Once more Fats closely watched the girl as she handled the wheel. Her attitude about Red hadn't surprised him and he suspected that Pearl was secretly mixed up with Dent. He threw out another feeler.

"Cal seems a little gone on that nurse," he said.

Pearl blushed and answered too quickly. "Nuts," she said. "Cal Dent isn't gone on anyone. He's not the boy to let a woman get at him."

"Hope you're right," Fats said. "It's bad enough to have Red and Gino fighting; we don't want any extra complications. If it was up to me, I'd knock the dame off first thing. It's crazy to have her hanging around."

"Dent'll take care of her when the time comes," Pearl said. But already she was beginning to doubt it. The fat man must have caught it too. Dent did seem a little soft on her. She slowed the car a little and spoke softly to her companion.

"Just to make sure," she said, "maybe you better put her out of the way, first chance you get."

Fats nodded. "You got something there," he said. "Get her out of the way and we cut down the risks. And one or two more out of circulation and you raise the ante. You see it that way?"

"I see it that way." Fats leaned toward her and one pudgy white hand patted her thigh.

"You and I can see together," he said.

"Maybe we could," Pearl said, finding it difficult not to draw away from the man's ugly hand. "Who knows?"

"I know," Fats said. "You think it over."

Yes, Pearl decided. I'll think it over, all right. And as soon as I get back to the shanty, I'll talk it over. With Cal Dent.

Pearl was busy with her thoughts as they neared the village. Things were, in a sense, working out better than she could have hoped. She had planned, from the very beginning, to ditch Red when the job was completed, since she'd tie in with Dent. But now, with Dent getting interested in the Ballin girl, she realized that she must be prepared to make a switch if necessary.

Red himself would prove no problem. The chances were that Gino would take care of him, sooner or later. In any case, she'd have no trouble telling him off.

And here was Fats, all set to double-cross Dent. Well, God knows, Fats was no bargain, but he might be an answer if worse came to worst. She couldn't imagine herself in any personal relationship with the grubby little monster, but she saw no reason why, if events called for it, she couldn't make a temporary deal with him.

She turned to her companion, and for the first time spoke with warmth in her voice.

"We got time for some breakfast," she said. "Suppose I pull up to the diner up ahead?"

Fats looked at his watch, a heavy gold-cased old-fashioned railway timepiece, which

he carried on a worn, long gold-plated chain.

"Run into town first," he said, "and we'll pick up the morning papers. We can grab a bite at the station."

Once more the headlines were devoted entirely to the Wilton kidnapping. With nothing new on the case and the police and FBI giving out no information, city editors had been hard pushed to find a fresh angle.

All morning papers carried, however, stories emanating from Wilton's attorney, who pleaded with police and public alike to give his client complete freedom of movement to make contact with the kidnappers, so as to protect the child. One tabloid ran an open letter to the kidnap gang, based on no known authority, which promised them that no effort would be made to seek their identity until such time as the child had been safely returned. Ironically, however, another column carried news of large-scale rewards being offered by a number of diverse persons and organizations for the apprehension of the gang.

Fats ordered ham and eggs and coffee and Pearl had a piece of Danish pastry as the two of them sat at the counter, side by side, and casually looked over the morning stories.

Later, standing on the platform waiting for the train to pull in, Fats turned to the girl, handing her the newspapers, which he had carried under his arm.

"You better take 'em back to the cabin," he said. "Not but what it's all hog-wash."

Pearl nodded and took the papers.

"Think over what I said," Fats said in a low voice as the train pulled in. "Keep your eyes open. I'll see you tomorrow."

Pearl nodded and smiled at him.

"I'll see you," she said. "Good luck."

She turned and left the platform as the engine pulled to a stop. The light raincoat she had thrown over her shoulders had kept some of the water off, but her feet were soaked and her hair was dripping as she climbed into the Packard. She took a rag from the glove compartment and shivered slightly as she tried to dry herself.

Shortly after the car had passed the turnoff to the cottage on the way back toward Land's End, the windshield wiper suddenly stopped working. Pearl drove on for a matter of a minute or so, and then pulled over to the side of the road. She was unable to see through the glass.

For several minutes she fooled with the wiper button, and then she opened the door and walked to the front of the car. She tried manipulating the blade by hand and found that it worked freely but that the rain at once covered the windshield after she moved it.

She damned Red under her breath as she darted back to the front seat of the car. She wound down the window on her left, and holding her hand off of the side, slowly put the car in motion. A moment later she heard the sound of a horn in back of her. Barely able to see, she again pulled over.

The car passed her slowly and then a second later came to a full stop in front of her. Once more Pearl jammed on her brakes. Pearl recognized Jack Fawcett as he stepped from the patrol car and swung back toward her. He was troubled by the south-west and the rain poured from his helmeted head.

"Having trouble, Mrs. Mason?" he asked, leaning against the opened window.

Pearl was torn between anger and a peculiar sense of fear.

"Windshield wiper," she said finally. "It seems to be broken."

The man reached through the window and played with the button. He shook his head.

"Pull the button that opens the hood," he said.

A moment later he slammed the hood shut. The wiper was once more working.

"Hose connection came off," he said, again

leaning on the door. "Out kinda early this morning, aren't you?"

Pearl nodded. "Had to take one of our guests to the station," she explained.

Pearl had taken a pack of cigarettes from the seat at her side and was attempting to light one. But the matches had become soaked and refused to ignite. Fanwell watched her silently for a moment.

"I have a dry one," he said. "Better let me help you."

He walked around in front of the car and came to the other side. Opening the door, he crouched a little to climb into the front seat. He pulled the door shut, and then, not taking a match from his pocket, he pushed in the lighter on the dashboard. Carefully he watched the girl as he waited for it to heat up. He noticed that her hand was shaking as she held the cigarette to her lips.

"Nervous?" he asked.

Pearl looked at him, her eyes wide.

"I got up early to go to the station. This storm—it makes everybody nervous, I guess. Lightning frightens me."

The policeman nodded, making no move to get out of the car.

"How is Mr. Mason?" he asked.

"Well, he's better."

"He seems to have a lot of friends," Fanwell said.

"They're business friends," Pearl answered.

"What business is your husband in, Mrs. Mason?"

For a moment Pearl looked startled. But then, quickly, she caught herself.

"He was in the Army," she said. "Right now he's resting up for a time."

"And then he will go back to business?" Fanwell asked, with what struck Pearl as an odd persistency.

"Yes," Pearl said. "And then he'll go back to business."

"You should have taken your guest to the station at Land's End," Fanwell said. "It's shorter."

Again Pearl looked full into the man's eyes.

"I wasn't sure the early train stopped there," she said at last. "Do you think this storm is going to keep up for long?"

"It may. Are you people keeping dry and comfortable out there? You know, I can stop by later, if you'd like, and see that everything is all right."

Pearl felt the blood drain from her face.

"No," she said quickly. "No, we're fine, thank you. Everything is all right."

Fanwell reached for the door handle. He smiled again as he stepped to the side of the road. He spoke as he started to close the door.

"Well, just let us know if you need anything," he said. "Out here in the sticks, that's mostly what cops are for."

He closed the door of the car as Pearl stared at him.

Once more driving toward the village, she suddenly decided to head directly back to the hideout rather than stop for groceries, as she had planned. She didn't like it at all. Definitely, Fanwell had seemed suspicious. Why had he asked her all of those questions? What business was it of his what she was doing on the road early in the morning, or where she decided to deliver a guest?

And that suggestion of coming out to see that everything was all right. She was more sure than ever that he suspected something. He swung the wheel and turned back to the cutoff road.

The roar of the heavy surf was deafening as the Packard pulled through the saturated sands of the road, crossing the dunes toward the hideout. Pearl threw the gear shift into second, and then finally into low. The wind had steadily risen, and the water was coming down in sheets. The nervousness that Pearl

had been feeling ever since the village policeman had stopped by the side of her car to help with the windshield wiper had gradually increased until now she felt complete terror overcoming her. She was half sobbing as she drew up in front of the place.

Automatically she switched off the ignition and she stumbled as she opened the door. Grabbing the newspapers, she made a dash for the porch.

The three of them, Dent, Red, and Gino, were standing like statues as she entered the unlocked front door. For a second, while she stood there in the opened doorway with the wind and rain slashing in around her, they seemed like some strange and almost unreal characters in a tableau.

Dent was the first to move.

Without a word, he crossed the room and grabbed her by the arm, pulling her in and out of the rain. And then he quickly reached for the knob and pulled the door shut.

"Shut up and listen!" His voice gritted out the order between closed teeth.

Automatically Pearl turned like the others and faced the radio. The words, harsh with static, were coming from the speaker.

CHAPTER TWELVE

"Police late last night announced they have located several witnesses who recognized the kidnaper car. Identity of one man, believed a gardener on a Connecticut estate, is being kept secret. It is understood that this man observed the actual kidnapping, at the time that the Wilton station wagon was forced to the side of the road. License numbers that he is said to have supplied police have been traced to a limousine stolen in Queens six days ago. This is thought to be the car used by the kidnappers."

Static suddenly crackled over the set and the announcer's voice faded out. Dent quickly crossed the room and twisted the dial and then once more the voice came to those in the room, clear and distinct.

"... at four o'clock this afternoon, when Mrs. Wilton will make a personal plea to the kidnappers over a nationwide hookup..."

Dent snapped off the set.

"Damn it," he said. "I had a feeling that car might be spotted." He swung toward Red.

"Didn't I tell you not to pick up a car on Long Island?" he said, spitting the words out in a bitter, low voice. "Why the hell won't you guys ever listen to me?"

Red reached into the icebox for a bottle of beer. He jerked the cap off, using the head of a nail sticking out of the wall.

"Aw, hell, Cal," he said. "What's a difference? So they know the heap was jacked on Long Island. That don't make 'em know where we are."

"That isn't the idea," Dent said. "I don't want them localizing any part of the job on Long Island. I just hope to God nobody spotted that pile out this way and reported it. It's a good thing we're going to turn this thing up tomorrow night." He turned toward Pearl and suddenly became aware of her dead-white face. The girl sat on the edge of a chair, nervously twisting her fingers.

"What's wrong with you?" he snapped.

Pearl looked at him blankly for a second. Then she told him about the windshield wiper and the cop.

"You're not to worry," she said. "Wanted to know what my husband's business was. Asked about his friends. Dent. I don't like it. Something's eating 'em. He even said he might stop out here and see if everything is going all right."

"He stops out here," Red said, "an' I'll stop him. Lousy snooper."

Gino sneered and turned to the couch. He

had taken the bandages off his face and he looked as if he had gone through a meat chopper. He still limped badly and his shirt was open to the waist, exposing wide swatches of white bandaging. He sat down painfully.

"The cop is suspicious, all right," Dent said. "But I don't think he has made any connection, at least, not yet."

Gino looked up. "Let's take the kid and make a run for it," he suggested. "Pearl and Red can go back to the apartment in town and take the kid in with them after dark. You and I can make the meet with Fats, pick up another car out this way, and go ahead with the plan tomorrow night."

"And what about the nurse?" Red asked.

"What about her? I'll take care of her all right," Gino smiled evilly as he said it. "As far as that goes, I can take care of both her and the kid. We don't need them."

"You ain't gonna hurt that kid," Red said suddenly, his oddly broken face crinkling and his eyes going small and mean. "I ain't gonna see nothing happen to that kid."

Dent jumped to his feet. "Shut up, all of you," he ordered. "We aren't going to move. You're setting yourselves up for a lot of reason. We only got another day here. Nothing has happened yet and nothing will. As long as we got the kid, and as long as she's alive, we got an insurance policy. Start killing people and we'll all be dead. That's when the law will really begin to close in. Right now, so long as we got the kid, they aren't going to do nothing to make it hard for us. We got to stay here and sit tight."

"Maybe," Pearl said. "Gino is right, though. Maybe Red and I should go back to town."

Red swung to her, his eyes dangerous. "You sticking up for Gino against me?" he asked.

"I'm sticking up for myself," Pearl said. "I'm frightened. First that damned cop. And this radio, going all the time."

"Look," Dent said. "Don't be a bunch of damned fools. Everything is going just as we planned it. There's nothing to worry about. Wilton will have the dough and Fats will make the contact. I told you, we'll clean it up tomorrow. Now for God's sake sit tight and take it easy. You all knew it was going to be tough when we started out on this job. So take it easy."

"Well, if this damned rain would only stop..." Pearl said.

"Never mind the rain. How about making some grub?" Dent gestured toward the icebox.

"I'm going up and get on some dry clothes first," Pearl answered.

Red followed her wordlessly.

After he had next to the door of the bedroom, after he had closed it behind them. His eyes watched Pearl as she stripped off her dripping clothes. Red moved to reach for her, but Pearl quickly pushed him away.

"Not now," she said. "For God's sake, not now. Can't you see I don't feel right."

Red shrugged. "Nothing to be scared of," he said.

Pearl quickly swung back toward him. Her arms were out and she reached around his neck, pulling his face down to her own.

"Red," she whispered. "Listen, Red. Let's you and I duck. Let's get out of here now. We should never have got mixed up in this. There's going to be trouble."

Red pulled his head back.

"We're gonna stay and see it through," he said, his voice surly. "How about the money, huh? You want we should walk off on the money?"

Pearl pressed close to the big man and her eyes were wide and her mouth a seductive invitation as she looked up at him.

"You got me, Red," she said. "You got me, and the money won't be no good to us if they catch us."

Pearl tried all of the old tricks, but this time they didn't work. Red had a strictly

one-track mind. And his mind was on the ransom money. He pushed her away.

"Get some clothes on and come down and cook some grub," he said brutally, turning to the door. "We're gonna see it through."

They ate hash and soft-boiled eggs. Gino cursing at the pain he suffered each time he opened his jaws. Pearl stacked the dishes in the sink, not bothering to wash them.

"Let that dame in the other room wash 'em," she said. "It's time she earned her keep."

Later, when the rain slackened off, Dent told her to drive back into town and pick up some more food.

"But be careful," he warned. "If you run into that cop, play up to him a little bit. Try and find out just what he's thinking. Offer to buy him a drink, but be careful you don't get tight yourself. I want to find out just what's on his mind."

"He makes me nervous," Pearl said.

"All right, be nervous. But be careful. You can handle it. Remember, he's just a small-town clown. All you gotta do is keep him quiet for another day. Play him along."

After Pearl left, Gino went back upstairs to try to get some more sleep. Dent helped him up, and when they were alone in the room, Gino once more spoke of the possibility of getting away from the shack. Dent went out of his way to reason with the little hoodlum and finally was satisfied that he had convinced him that the best policy was to sit tight until the next night.

When Dent returned downstairs he went at once to the door leading into the back bedroom. He told Terry to come out and get something to eat for the two of them.

Dent then sat at the table with an oil can and a rag. Carefully he began dismantling and cleaning the submachine gun as the girl made sandwiches. As she was about to return with the food for the child, he looked up.

"After you eat," he said, "come back and clean up the dishes."

Terry nodded and went into the bedroom. "I got somethin' for the kid," Red said suddenly. He went over to the mantel above the fireplace and took down a hand-carved wooden gun. "I made it out in the garage yesterday," he added, pride on his face.

Dent looked at it and nodded his head toward the door.

"When she gets through eating, take it in to her," he said.

Red waited for Terry to return, pacing the floor. When she entered the room, he walked over to her and smiled.

"It's for the kid," he said, holding out the toy gun.

Terry smiled.

"You'd better give it to her," she said.

Red went into the back room.

Dent was conscious of the girl at the sink, as he worked over the gun, but he kept his eyes on his work and didn't look up. Occasionally Terry looked surreptitiously in his direction, and there was a puzzled expression about her eyes. The door to the back room was open and she heard Janie laughing. Red's voice reached them now and then as he talked with the child. They heard him tell her that now that she had a gun, he would make her a member of the mob. Janie said, "Fine, I'll shoot Gino first." Red laughed uproariously.

Finally Dent looked up at the girl.

"Your blankets get soaked in there?"

"Not too bad, but I'd like to dry them before the fire. The dampness here gets through everything."

"Bring 'em in," Dent said.

Terry hung the heavy Army blankets over the backs of a couple of chairs.

She glanced at Dent and then, seeing that he was staring at her, quickly looked away.

"How long—" she began, when he quickly interrupted her.

CAVALIER



"This is going to be an awkward situation—she doesn't speak English!"

"Another day," he said. "Maybe two at the most. You'll just have to keep her quiet for a little longer. It will be over soon."

Terry took a deep breath. Her face contained an odd mixture of fear and relief.

"And then?"

"And then the kid will go back." As he said it, Dent suddenly saw the girl's face blank. "And you, too," he quickly added. "Both of you—you'll both be all right."

Later, after the girl had again returned to the back room, he wondered why he had said it. Certainly, at this point, he had made no definite plans, not even in his own mind, for the safe return of the girl. The child, yes. He would see that the child was returned safely, in spite of Gino and in spite of Fats. But the girl?

Suddenly he cursed her under his breath. What the hell was she to him, after all? A cypher, that was all. A mere cypher. Why was he beginning to worry about her? And why, above all, was he going out of his way to reassure her?

Dent felt a peculiar sense of confusion as he attempted to straighten out the thoughts in his own mind. Finally he shrugged and went back to oiling the weapon in his hands. His mind was no longer on the girl. It was a thousand miles away.

He was climbing aboard the charter boat from the dock in Miami, the boat that would eventually, after a week's deep-sea fishing, drop him off on an obscure shore not far from Havana.

He sat motionless, staring out toward the sea through the rain-streaked window, as he projected his imagination ahead. Yes, it was all set in his mind's eye. First Miami, then Cuba, and then South America. Within hours of the time he got his hands on the money, he'd be on his way. It would be the last he would see of Red and Fats and Gino. Of any of them. Except possibly Pearl. About her, he still hadn't made up his mind.

But, he rationalized, why Pearl? Hell, with a quarter of a million dollars, why should he take any chances at all? Alone and traveling light, he could go far and he could go safely. And his plans were already made.

The others? Well, the hell with the others. Let them look out for themselves, once he had the ransom dough. And then his thoughts suddenly went back to Terry Dallas and the child.

Yes, there was one thing he would do if it were at all possible. He would see to it that the kid was released without being hurt. Not only for her sake, but for his own as well.

And at that moment Dent finally decided that he would definitely leave Pearl behind. For a second he had a passing and fugitive sense of regret that he had not taken her while she was available. But, he reflected, there were many Pearls—especially for a man with a quarter of a million dollars.

The sound of the car's engine brought Cal Dent back to reality.

The rain had fallen off to a drizzle and the wind was dying as Dent put the pieces of the gun on the table and went to the window.

This time Pearl stopped at the door only long enough to wait for Red to come out and get the two large bags of groceries. Then she drove the car around and left it in front of the barn.

Entering the house, she told Dent she had failed to see the cop in town, even though she had stopped at the tavern as well as the grocery store. She seemed to have calmed down.

When Dent turned the radio on at four o'clock, they were all in the living room: that is, all but Terry.

Red sat on the couch, the child on his lap, half asleep. Gino stood by the mantel, his back to the fire, and Dent and Pearl were at the table.

With the exception of a number of false rumors, which the announcer himself men-

tioned, there was no news on the Wilton case.

Several moments' later, Janie Wilton herself woke up as her mother's voice came over the air. She sat open-mouthed as she listened.

"This is Mrs. Gregory Wilton."

The voice was very low and held an odd calm note.

"I want to talk to the men who are holding my baby, Janie Wilton."

For a moment the voice broke, and then it went on, this time a little stronger.

"Whoever you are, and wherever you are," she continued, "I want you to know that we will meet your ransom demands. Just please don't hurt my baby."

Again there were several seconds of silence and once more the voice continued, speaking softly but very distinctly.

"Janie, if you can hear me, this is Mamma. Be a good little girl and do what Terry tells you to do if he is with you. Whoever is with you, please do what they say and obey them. Daddy and I will bring you home soon. Janie . . ."

And then the voice broke for the last time and a moment later the announcer returned.

Janie had squirmed out of Red's arms and was standing in front of him, looking baffled as she stared at the radio. Dent quickly turned it off.

Turning to Red, the child smiled.

"That was my mommy," she said proudly. "I bet she doesn't know I'm a member of your gang."

"Take her back in the other room, Red," Dent said shortly.

Gino laughed, for no particular reason.

"They're willing to pay," Dent said. "Don't worry, they're willing to pay."

Pearl said nothing, but walked to the window and looked out.

Red came back a moment later.

"She's some kid," he said. "Some kid—a real sweetie!"

"She's a half million dollars," Dent said. "Who wants a beer?"

Pearl left the window and walked over to the icebox.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Thursday had been a tough day on all of them.

It had started with the heavy winds and the rain, but by evening the air had cleared and it had developed into a typical gloomy, bleak fall evening. Nothing in the world can be more depressing than a summer seaside cottage that time of the year, in that kind of weather.

Pearl had always been sensitive to weather, and the heavy atmosphere had combined with her natural fears to put her in an unhappy mood. Her emotions were near the surface, and even when the fear began to leave her, she still felt a forlorn sense of foreboding.

Red had nerves of iron, but the inactivity of the last few days was beginning to wear on him. He wanted people and gaiety, and with the exception of the child, Janie, the others either bored or annoyed him. He would have liked to talk with Terry but those others, particularly Pearl, had made that impossible. His restlessness hadn't interfered with his appetite, but shortly after dinner he began to pace the floor.

Gino was probably having the worst time of all. With him it wasn't a matter of nerves; it was a matter of pain. Red had given him a brutal beating, and he still ached all over. But even more than the physical pain was the agony of his emotional pain. He seethed with a cold hatred for all of them, but mostly for Red.

Dent was quick to sense the tension and he

regretted that the weather had held up their plans for an additional twenty-four hours. From the very beginning he had realized that this was the sort of job that must be consummated as quickly as possible. He had a keen sense of judgment as to just how much the others would be able to stand.

Terry and the child had gone to bed soon after dinner. Pearl sat on the couch and her eyes followed Red as he paced the floor. Finally she threw the cigarette she had just lighted halfway across the room.

"For God's sake," she said, "will you plant yourself someplace! You're driving me nuts."

Red swung around and faced her. "Listen, you—"

Dent quickly stood up. "Take it easy," he said. "I know everyone is keyed up. I'll tell you what I'll do. I got a little surprise upstairs in my bag. Take it easy a second, and I'll go up and bring it down."

They all watched him as he walked to the staircase.

Dent went into his bedroom and pulled a canvas satchel from under his cot. He drew open the zipper and reached under a half-dozen shirts and some underwear. He pulled out a fifth of brandy.

"Well, I guess this is an emergency," he said under his breath as he closed the bag. His face was very sober.

Pearl looked up as Dent returned.

"My hunch was right," she said. She put four glasses on the table.

"Drinking," Dent said, "is a lousy idea. But I guess we all got one coming."

Gino pulled himself out of his chair and crossed to the table. He took his straight and his face showed pain as he drained the shot glass. Red drank his quickly and laughed nervously. Pearl and Dent mixed theirs with water. They sat around the table and Dent poured seconds.

Red downed his drink, then smiled.

"Can you imagine," he said, "a guy can dig up a half-million bucks. Jess, you wouldn't think there was that much money in the whole damn world!"

"There's that much," Dent said, "and we'll have it in another twenty-four hours."

"Or maybe they'll have us," Pearl said.

Red looked at her and scowled. Dent laughed and Gino's face cracked into an ironic grin.

The liquor had its usual effect, and gradually the tensions that had been building up all day were relaxed as they sat and talked. Once or twice Red addressed a remark directly to Gino, and even that dour little man's face seemed to lose its perpetual mask of bitterness.

Pearl was quick to react to the alcohol, and she rapidly assumed an air of wild gaiety. Dent himself drank sparingly and watched the others. Red found a hillbilly band on the radio and drummed on the table with a spoon in time with the music. For more than two hours they sat there talking of the money and what they would do with it.

After his third shot drink, Gino had pulled himself to his feet and gone over to the couch. The alcohol had given him momentary surcease from his physical pains, and for the first time he lay back completely at ease. His mind was soon trapped in the vicious circle of his own dreams and desires, and he no longer listened to the others.

At 11 o'clock Dent got up and rewired the radio dial until he found a news program.

Outside of wild speculation and false rumors, there was nothing new on the Wilton kidnapping. Dent soon snapped it off.

"Let's kill it," he said, motioning to the almost empty bottle, "and then hit the sack."

Pearl poured the remaining brandy into three glasses. Realization that the bottle was empty, combined with the radio news, had suddenly sobered her.

Dent downed his drink.

"You all get some sleep," he said. "I'll hold the fort."

Gino looked up from the couch. "No," he said. "I can't sleep anyway. The rest of you go up and I'll sit here for a while."

Dent looked at him closely.

"O.K.," he said. "Call me when you get tired and I'll relieve you. But be sure to call me. We're too close to home now to take any chances. Somebody's got to be awake all the time from now on."

Gino grunted.

He stared open-eyed at the ceiling as Pearl and Red started for the stairway, followed a second later by Cal Dent.

Twenty minutes later, as he pulled the gray Army blanket up to his chin, Dent heard Red and Pearl quietly quarreling in the next room. There was the sudden sound of blows and a moment later he heard Pearl crying. For another fifteen minutes he was kept awake by the sounds coming through the thin partition of the wall separating the two rooms, and then all was quiet.

He couldn't sleep.

After turning and tossing for more than half an hour, he finally reached over for the flashlight at the side of his bed. He snapped the switch and directed the beam on his wrist watch. Then he got up and pulled the light cord. He went back and sat on the side of the bed and reached for a cigarette.

For Cal Dent, insomnia was almost a total new experience. He had always been able to drop off within minutes after going to bed. Cal realized that there was something disturbing him. He thought about the job. But it wasn't that. Things were coming along just as he had planned them. He admitted to himself that the situation was tense, that the others were keyed up. But he himself wasn't a worrier and he had been in plenty of tighter spots. No, it wasn't worry over the job that was keeping him awake.

Red and Pearl it was true that the sounds from the other room had annoyed him. But being an unwilling witness to their warfare hadn't bothered him, and he had only been glad when they had quieted down.

He drew long drags from his cigarette and wondered what it was that was keeping him awake. At last, when the butt became too short to smoke, he stubbed it out in the ash tray and stood up. He pulled on a pair of trousers and stepped into his shoes without bothering to lace them.

Gino looked at him curiously when he entered the downstairs room.

"Go up and hit the sack," Dent said. "I can't sleep."

Gino grunted and sat up. Wordlessly he nodded and started upstairs.

For a number of minutes Cal sat and stared into the dead fireplace. He felt very strange. The drinks? No, it couldn't be that. He hadn't taken enough to feel it. Anyway, liquor had never had much effect on him. It was only when he became conscious of the movement in the next room that it came to him.

It was the girl, Terry. Somehow, all along, she had been in the back of his mind. Her very presence seemed to have been upsetting him from the very moment she had entered the hideout.

As he listened intently, he once more heard a slight sound, as though they were tossing in her sleep. He sat there thinking of her, thinking of her lying on that hard Army cot not more than ten feet away. There was nothing between them but the thin wallboard partition.

Dent stood up and crossed the room. He made no noise as he carefully turned the doorknob.

The light fell obliquely across the bed-room. He stood half in the doorway. He could see the outlines of the child as she slept

curled up in a tight ball. He could hear her heavy breathing. He opened the door a little wider and looked over at the other cot.

Terry lay bathed in the light. Her flaming hair was a halo around her white face on the pillow. Her large eyes were wide and she was looking directly at him. For a full minute they stared at each other, neither one moving.

Dent took a step into the room. As he moved toward her the girl suddenly swung her feet to the floor, pulling the blanket up to her chin.

"No," she said. "No."

There was the urgency of fear in her voice. Dent stopped short, as though he had suddenly walked straight into a concrete wall. Again he stared at her.

"I can't sleep," he said finally. His voice was a dull monotone, almost without meaning.

Terry rose to her feet, winding the blanket around herself. She nodded toward the other cot.

"I don't want her to wake up," she said in a low whisper. "I don't want to wake her. Please go."

"I can't sleep," Dent said once more.

"I'll come out," Terry said. "But please go now. I'll come out."

Wordlessly Dent backed to the door. He half closed it as he went into the other room.

Within less than two minutes Terry followed him into the room. Carefully she closed the bedroom door on the sleeping child. Dent was vaguely conscious of the fact that she had swiftly pulled on a sweater and skirt. Her legs and feet were bare.

The girl walked into the room, watching him as she moved. She went over to the couch and sat in the corner of it, tucking her legs under herself.

"The others have all gone to bed," Dent said aimlessly.

Terry nodded.

"And you," she said. "You have to stay up?" "I couldn't sleep," Dent said. "I was thinking about you."

He looked over at her and for the first time he was fully aware of her in the room with him.

Now there was no fright in her, only a strange look of curiosity.

His eyes followed the lines of her slender body up to the white column of her throat. And then once more he stared into her face. He repeated himself.

"I was thinking of you."

"What were you thinking of me?" Terry said.

"What kind of a girl are you?" Dent asked. "Who have you known—what have you done?"

Terry half-smiled. "I guess I'm just an ordinary girl, like all girls," she said. "I've known a lot of people, but never anyone quite like you and these other men here."

"I'm not like the others," Dent said.

"Yes, I know. But I've never known anyone like any of you. And as to what I've done—well, I've never done much of anything, until this happened to me."

"Men?" Dent said. "Have you known many men? Are you married? Do you have a boy friend?"

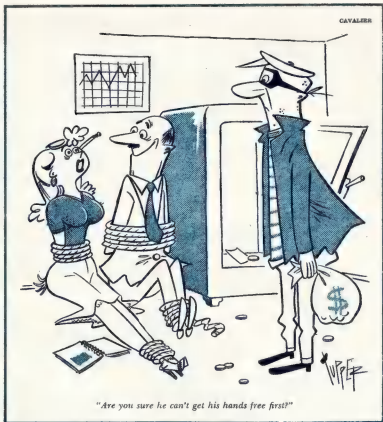
Terry laughed softly. "I'm not married," she said. "I have a lot of boy friends."

Dent walked over to the couch and looked down at her for several minutes. She looked up into his face and still there was no fear in her.

He sat down, suddenly, beside her. She reached over and took one of her hands.

"I've never known anyone like you," he said.

He felt her go taut as he held her hand in his own, but she made no effort to withdraw it. And then in a moment she relaxed and



"Are you sure he can't get his hands free first?"

her head fell against the back of the couch.

Dent turned his body toward her and his other hand reached out and he took her arms. He pulled her toward him until their faces were only inches apart.

For a moment he stared at her and then quickly he pulled her close and his lips found her mouth. He felt her slender body stiffen in his arms.

A moment later he drew back. His eyes were suddenly cold and bleak.

"What's the matter?" he said. "Haven't you ever been kissed before?" His voice was bitter and vicious as he spoke. He still held her arms above the elbows and her body was still pressed close to his.

"Terry looked back at him and there was still no fear in her face.

"I've been kissed," she said. "I've been kissed. Only . . ."

"Well, then, kiss me," Dent said. Once more he leaned toward her. Her lips were slightly parted as he found her mouth again. Her hands came up between them and she pressed slightly against his chest but she didn't struggle.

Dent's right hand fell from her arm and went around her waist.

Terry shook her head quickly and Dent took his lips away for a brief second.

"No," she said. "No. You don't understand. There has never been anyone . . ."

"There is now," Dent said. "There is now."

He reached across her and found the light switch on the lamp at the end of the couch. A moment later only the moonlight streaking across the floor gave illumination to the room.

Terry started to say something, but once more Dent found her mouth. He lifted her from the couch and stood her on her feet,

never taking his lips from hers. She began to fight with him silently and he breathed heavily. His lips drew away from hers and he kissed her neck hungrily. His arms held her tightly and his hands caressed her. She moaned.

Time stood still in that moon-sprayed room, and the sound of the surf roaring and breaking on the sands outside played an obbligato to the surging blood racing back and forth through his constricted veins.

They fell to the floor. Only dimly was he aware of the girl's struggles. It seemed to him then as though for a moment she willingly yielded to his demands. He didn't realize that she was unconscious.

The fury of his desires mounted to a higher and ever higher pitch and his passion was a hard, cruel thing. He was consumed with an abandoned exaltation that knew no control and no point of saturation.

He felt the taste of her tears as he kissed her face.

It must have been more than a half hour later when he picked her up as gently as though he were lifting a child and carried her into the other room. He closed the door behind him as he returned.

Like a man in hypnotic trauma, he tossed some kindling into the fireplace and lighted newspapers under it. He didn't turn on the light again, but he was vaguely aware that the rain had fallen off to a slow periodic drizzle and the wind had died down to a whisper.

He lay on the couch and stared sightlessly at the ceiling.

The wonder of the last hour overwhelmed him. Nothing, nothing ever in all the years of his strange and wild life, had prepared him for this night.

Pearl lay there for several minutes, her eyes still closed, and tried hard to remember where she was. There was an odd roaring noise in her ears. At first she was completely unable to identify the sound, and then, suddenly, she knew that it was the muffled drum of a high-powered engine. For a moment she thought she was back on that old white iron bed in the tenement on Tenth Avenue and that what she was hearing was the growl of a truck or bus pulling up the avenue in gear.

She turned in her half sleep to face the wall and tried hard to drop off into unconsciousness again. But the whine of the engine grew deep and close.

She opened one eye and tried to open the other, but it was frozen tight with sleep. And then she knew where she was. She was in the second-floor bedroom of the beach cottage, out on the south shore of Long Island. Looking toward the window, she knew that it was already daylight, although the room itself was still shrouded in shadows. She pulled herself into a sitting position on the side of the bed and shivered.

Reaching to the floor, she found her dressing gown and lifted it up across her shoulders. She stood up and pulled the cord hanging from the socket in the ceiling. She was alone in the room.

Walking unsteadily to the mirror that hung from a nail on the wall, she stared at her face. The eye that was still closed was encircled by a large black bruise.

Pearl cursed Red as she poured water from the pitcher into an old-fashioned basin. She splashed at her face and pulled a broken comb through her hair. Reaching for her wrist watch a moment later, she saw that it was ten after eight.

From the dark brown taste in her mouth, Pearl knew that she was in for a bad morning. She hoped that she would be able to hold a drink when she got downstairs. She hoped that there was a drink.

Once more she heard the roar of a powerful engine and this time she was able to identify it. There was a plane somewhere overhead and it must be circling. She reached for the slippers lying at the foot of the bed and put her bare feet into them. She shivered again as she opened the door and found the staircase.

The first thing she saw on entering the living room was Dent, peeking from behind the curtains of the window next to the door. Gino

and Red stood by the mantelpiece, their backs to the fireplace, staring at the ceiling of the room as though they could see through it. A moment later Dent reached for his field glasses and opened the window. He trained the glasses on the sky at an angle.

After another two or three minutes, Pearl was aware of the sound of the plane fading off in the distance. Dent slammed the window shut and walked to the table.

Gino was the first to speak.

"Well, was it?" he asked.

Every eye in the room was on Dent.

"It was," he said. "A helicopter. No Army or Navy insignia that I could see. Probably the New York City police."

Pearl felt herself go faint and she staggered to the couch and half fell on it.

"It figures," Dent continued. "The radio said they're making a search of Long Island."

"Let's get out of here." Gino's voice was high and thin.

Dent turned to him savagely.

"Don't be a goddamned fool," he said. "They're probably patrolling the beaches and the roads all over the island. They have no way of knowing we're here. After all, what the hell can they see from the air? They buzzed the place only once. What they're probably looking for is a sign of the kidnap car. That's all they could be looking for. Well, the car's in the garage. There's nothing to worry about."

Red shook his head a couple of times. "Alla same, I don't like it," he said. "What the hell would they expect to find, if they didn't know something?"

Dent turned to him and made an obvious effort to keep his voice calm. "Listen, Red, you got better sense than that. Sure they're checking up. A case like this they check everything. As long as we sit tight, we're safe. They can't know about this hideout. The only giveaway would be if we got jittery and started to light out. The trouble with you," and his eyes went from one to the other of those in the room, "the trouble is you're all on edge and you got hangovers. This is the time you gotta keep control."

Pearl stood up and there was a glazed expression in her eyes. Normally large and vivid, they were shot with blood this morning and had an oddly tarnished appearance.

"I gotta have a drink," she said.

"Breakfast," Red said. "That's what you gotta have."

Pearl looked at him quickly and hatred spread across her face.

"You rat," Red said. "You lousy rat. Look

at my face! Look what you did to me!" "Shut up," Red said, "or I'll do a lot more."

He raised his right arm and closed his fist, moving quickly toward the girl.

Pearl started to scream.

Gino, moving with a casual but deceptive speed, quickly stuck out his foot and Red tripped and fell. Dent crossed to Pearl. He slapped her hard, twice across the mouth. Pearl suddenly stopped screaming and fell to the couch.

"I wanna get out of here," she said in a muffled voice. "I wanna get out."

Terry Ballin's soft voice could be heard in the next room, and then a laugh from the child.

"Try to quiet Red down," Dent snapped.

"I'll take her upstairs."

He reached down and took Pearl under the arms and lifted her to her feet.

Gino sat at the table and laughed cynically. "Dames," he said. "Dames. That's what you get for pulling one in on a job like this."

Red, back on his feet, looked at him dully.

Dent was upstairs for less than five minutes. When he returned, he got a glass and filled it with tomato juice. He went back upstairs.

Pearl took the tomato juice first and then Dent went into his room. He came back with a whisky flask. He poured out a couple of ounces. The girl looked at it and shuddered, but nevertheless she reached for it. They sat side by side on the edge of the bed.

She took a sip and shuddered, her whole body trembling. And then she quickly lifted it to her lips once more and drained the glass.

The glass gradually left her eyes and her body quivered.

Putting her arms suddenly around Dent, she pulled him toward her and let her head fall on his shoulder.

"Cal, I'm sorry," she said. "I'm sorry I started to blow my top. But I'm frightened. Frightened half to death. And that Red. He didn't have to do what he did to me last night. He didn't have to get a few drinks in him the way he did as Gino."

Cal Dent stroked her hair softly, but his eyes were cold and lonesome as he stared over her head at the wall. He didn't speak.

And then Pearl lifted her head and shook it as though to clear her thoughts.

"I'll be O.K. now," she said. "Only just keep that lousy sonofabitch away from me."

"This will be the last day," Dent said softly. "Hang on for today, kid. Then it'll all be over. Just today."

Pearl looked at him and she smiled.

"Let something happen to him, Cal."

"We'll get the money first," Dent said.

"And then we'll see. Take it easy for a while and I'll go down and get some breakfast going. And hang on to yourself."

"I'm O.K. now," Pearl said. "The drink straightened me out. I'll be O.K. now."

Dent stood up and went to the door.

"Better get some clothes on," he said.

When Dent got back downstairs he was surprised to see Terry Ballin, sweater sleeves rolled above her elbows and her long auburn hair tied in two tight braids, standing over the two-burner kerosene stove frying eggs and bacon. He looked inquiringly at Red, who sat next to Gino on the couch.

"I told her to," Red said. "We gotta get something to eat around here somehow."

Terry turned from the stove and became aware of Dent quietly standing and watching her. For a moment she looked straight into his eyes, and as he stared back at her, neither seemed aware of the others in the room.

There was no softness to her face. Her eyes were huge and unblinking as she looked at him. She was completely unsmiling; her sensitive lips quivered imperceptibly.

Wordlessly she turned back to the stove and took the bacon from the fire and put it

CAVALIER



"I thought they were extinct."

on a cardboard plate, replacing the frying pan with the old-fashioned coffee pot.

The three men moved to the table and Dent was quick to observe that the girl had set only three places.

Later she made a plate of bacon and eggs for herself as the men ate. Dent watched her without expression as she carried the food into the other room and then returned for some milk and cereal for the child.

Red, looking over at Dent, said, "Some toots, eh, kid?"

Dent turned and stared at him. "Shut up." Pearl came downstairs before they had finished. When Dent asked her if she wanted to eat, she shook her head.

"Coffee for me," she said.

Dent poured her coffee and he noticed that Red carefully avoided looking at her.

Red finished and stood up. He walked over and reached for the leather jacket hanging in back of the stairway door.

"How's it coming?" Dent asked.

"Coming," Red said. "The paint is almost dry. I put the Pennsylvania plates on her, got the body stripped right down. She's going to look like a college kid's hot rod."

"Just so it don't look like it did before," Gino said.

"Look," Red said, "when I change a car over, no one can recognize it. Those damned limousines are a tough job, too."

"How's the engine in her?" Dent asked.

"Good," Red said. "She's fast, and with all the weight I've taken off her, she'll move right out. You won't have any trouble."

He closed the door carefully as he went out.

"At least he's a good mechanic," Gino said. "But I still think we shoulda picked up another load."

"No," Dent said. "The snatch car will do all right. Don't forget, we only got a very few miles to travel in it. We'll all end up in the Packard after the deal tonight and after we come back here for you."

"That's the one thing I don't like about the whole thing," Gino said. "Leaving me here, especially without any kind of car at all."

"Don't worry," Dent said. "You won't be here long."

Later, as Pearl cleaned up the dirty dishes, Dent again twirled the radio dials. He finally got a news broadcast, and again there was little news on the Wilton case. The announcer merely said the rumor was out that the child was on the verge of being returned. He did add, however, that television cameras had been set up near her Connecticut home pending the arrival of the child.

Pearl shook her head as she heard it.

"How the hell do they do it," she said. "How do they know? My God, you'd think those news hounds were psychic."

"It doesn't mean anything," Dent said. "They're just guessing—trying to play it safe in case of a break. They're guessing, but for once the guess makes sense."

Gino laughed without humor. "Be funny," he said, "what with television and everything, if something should happen and the kid don't show up."

Dent swung to him, his face bleak and his voice very low. "Listen. Don't get any ideas. Nothing's goin' to happen to either the money or the kid. I want that kid to be delivered safe and unhurt. As long as they get her back all right, the heat won't be on too tough. Anything happens to her, though, especially after we get the dough, they'll never stop till they get us. And another thing you want to keep in your head: Something should happen to that kid and our insurance policy goes out the window. And if we should be picked up then, brother, they'd never let you get as far as the jailhouse. You'd be torn to pieces."

Gino shrugged. "Don't tell me about it,"

he said. "I'm not going to do anything."

"Be sure you don't! Because if you should, what I'll do to you—or rather, what I'll have Red do to you—will make a cop's going over seem like a day in a rest home."

"You made up your mind about the girl yet?" Pearl asked.

Dent stared at the floor.

"Yes," he said at last. "And don't let that bother you. That's my department. Just do what you're supposed to."

Pearl looked over at Dent as he spoke and her lips curled.

"Play it smart, Cal," she said. "Play it smart and don't leave any undone business behind you."

"I won't," Dent said.

Pearl walked over to the clock and picked it up. She shook it, and then began to wind it.

"Ten thirty," she said. "Well, I guess Fats is taking his call about now."

Dent nodded. He walked to the window and looked out.

"Kinda muggy," he said, "but it's clearing. That helicopter got up all right, so I guess Dunleavy won't have any trouble."

Gino went upstairs soon after that. Dent pulled some logs on the fire and pulled the card table in front of it.

"Might as well sit down," he said to Pearl. "We've got some time to kill." He reached for a deck of cards and began to shuffle them.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

At three-forty-five, Pearl finished dressing and making up and came downstairs.

"Maybe," she said, "I should go in and get Fats."

"No," Dent said. "I told him to take a cab out."

"But why?" Pearl asked. "I thought you didn't want cabs coming out this way."

"From today on it won't matter," Dent said. "Another thing, just in case anything went wrong this afternoon, I wanted to be sure the Packard was here. Anyway, don't worry about it."

Five minutes later they heard the sound of the car approaching. Dent quickly looked out the window, then turned and nodded.

"It's him," he said.

Fats waited until the taxi turned around and started off before he knocked. When he entered, he smiled and held up his hand, his thumb and index finger forming a circle.

"It went like a dream," he said.

At twenty minutes to five, Red and Pearl left the hideout. Pearl carried a small hand-drawn map in her bag. She had carefully listened to Dent's final instructions. It was up to her from now on. Red would do the driving, and would be there if she needed him. But she'd have to carry the ball as far as the brainwork went.

Red wore his leather jacket and a fishing cap. He had a .45 automatic in a holster under his left armpit. A pair of sawed-off shotguns lay under a blanket on the floor in the back of the Packard.

Dent walked out to the barn with them. He leaned on the door at Pearl's side as she got in and Red tentatively pushed his foot on the starter.

"Remember," Dent said, "the diner at the edge of the airport. You be there at dusk and you'll have to watch close. The plane should be coming in any minute after you get there. A red and yellow monoplane. There can't be more than two persons aboard. The second it lands, get on that phone. Be in the booth, just in case. And once you got the message over, get out of there quick."

"Don't take a drink of anything, anywhere. Stay in the open; act natural. Get your dinner at the place I marked. Watch your timing

on the second call. From then on you'll know what to do. But keep your eyes open."

Pearl nodded. "Don't worry, Cal," she said. Red pushed the clutch in. "Be seen' you," he said.

The car pulled out of the old barn and Dent stood waiting for a moment before he hauled the doors shut and returned to the cottage.

"God," he muttered under his breath, "I hope they don't miff it."

The sun, rapidly sinking, hit Red full in the face as he drove west on the highway. When, some fifteen minutes after he had left, he cut to the north, he shook his head in relief. Pearl sat close to the door of the car and had not spoken to him once. Finally Red slowed the car slightly and spoke out of the corner of his mouth.

"Listen, baby," he started, "about last night . . ."

"I don't want to hear about last night," Pearl said, staring straight in front of her.

Red looked up for a moment and then quickly he smiled. "O.K., O.K., babe," he said. "The hell with last night, then, and the hell with you."

"That's right," Red said. "The hell with me."

Red gave up any further attempt at conversation until he came to the turnoff four miles to the southeast of Smithtown. He slowed down and looked over at Pearl, who had the map opened in her lap.

"Take it right," she directed.

Red turned and then, a few miles farther on, saw the outlines of the twin hangars. He drove slowly past them to the crossroads that marked the end of the small airfield. It was not quite dark yet, but someone had already turned on the blue and red neon lights outlining the place.

Red pulled the car into the parking lot and carefully turned it around so that it again faced the road, he noted the two trucks and the sedan pulled up in front. From where the sedan sat at the side of the diner, he figured it belonged to the place.

Pearl was quick to spot the telephone booth at the end of the diner, exactly where Dent had told her it would be. Red, however, swiftly cast the two men sitting on stools and drinking coffee. The white-aproned short-order cook was standing in front of them and talking. Next to the phone booth, at the end, were two doors leading to rest rooms. A shed attachment, built on after the diner had been trucked to the spot and placed on foundations, contained a small storage room.

Red could see that there was no one in it. Pearl went at once to a booth midway along the wall and sat down; Red went to the men's room.

The short-order cook had brought a couple of glasses of ice water to the table and was waiting for an order when Red returned.

"Make mine a couple of hamburgers and coffee," Pearl said.

"One and coffee," Red said, sitting down.

As the cook returned behind the counter, Pearl took a coin from her purse and put it in the slot on the wall and selected a jukebox number. Looking out the window at her side, she had a full view of the airport.

When the music began to play, Red leaned toward her.

"Check the woman's can," he said in a low voice.

Pearl nodded and stood up.

Twenty minutes later, after they had finished their food and Red had ordered a second hamburger, they heard the sound of a twin-engine plane. Both were nervous and on edge. The sun was at the horizon; visibility was poor.

Pearl started to her feet.

Again Red leaned toward her. "Wait," he said. "Let's be sure it's the right one."

Both were straining their eyes looking out toward the hangars when the man behind the counter walked over with a pad and pencil. He stood next to the table as Pearl looked up. "That be all, folks?" he asked.

Red started to say yes, when Pearl quickly cut in.

"Make it a couple of pieces of pie and more coffee," she said.

And then the plane, which had circled the field, came in low and made contact with the runway, some three hundred yards away. It was a red and yellow monoplane.

Pearl waited another minute, until it had come to a stop and then turned and taxied up to the nearest hangar. She watched as the pilot and one passenger alighted. Then she went to the phone booth.

Dent had given her the right number and she was able to get the operator at once.

The man who answered had a heavy Swedish accent, and for that first moment or two, Pearl wondered if she was going to be able to make him understand. She remembered Dent's instructions and didn't ask for Wilton at first, but said she wanted to talk to Dunelevy, the pilot. It wasn't until she mentioned the monoplane, however, that he got the idea. Her first three minutes were up and she had to make an additional deposit.

Through the glass door of the booth she could see Red watching her and she knew that he was alert and nervous. She also noticed that the man behind the counter was also watching her and she forced a smile at Red and nodded her head. Red stood up and walked to the counter, starting a conversation with the cook. Pearl was glad that the two truckers had already left the place.

When Pearl told Dunelevy that she wanted to talk to his passenger, he asked who she was calling. Pearl played it smart and gave him a name, the first name that came to her mind. And then she had Gregory Wilton on.

Dent had said, "Don't get fancy and try a coverup. If they ever get a chance to test your voice, you'll be dead anyway. Just be sure to get it across straight."

She used the McGuire name, however, in case an operator might be listening in.

"This is a friend of Jane's," she said. "Jane calls her Teddy bear Puggsy. Call a cab, go to East Hampton. Take a room at Harbor Inn. You are still McGuire. Wait for call."

She started to hang up as the voice urgently came to her.

"But can't I see you now?" Wilton said, his tone tense with worry. "Why not now? I have the—"

Quickly Pearl cut in.

"Do as you are told," she said. "You are being watched and will be watched. Any attempt to contact anyone and everything is off. Be careful."

She didn't wait for an answer, but quickly replaced the receiver. A moment later she joined Red at the counter.

"Yeah," Red was saying, "fishing was lousy. Guess we'll call it a day."

"Take you about two hours," the man said, apparently in answer to a question Red had previously asked. He gave him some change and added, "So long, now."

Red pushed open the screen door and Pearl followed him out. Pearl looked toward the airport hangar, but saw no one outside. They both got in the car and Red took the wheel. He headed for Smithtown.

Once away from the diner and the airport, he spoke, keeping his eyes on the road.

"Cal's too damned cautious. How did it go?"

"It went all right," Pearl said. "But gee, he sure seemed anxious. Wanted to make the meeting right away."

"I don't know why Cal wants to go all through that East Hampton nonsense," Red said. "Why not—"

"It's a good idea," Pearl interrupted. "Dent

knows what he's doing. The longer we keep Wilton waiting, the more nervous he's going to get, and the more cautious. If he thinks he's being watched, you can bet he's going to play it safe. Right now, he's as anxious as we are that the law doesn't cut in a hand. Anyway, the plane had to come in before dark, and the way Cal's working it, we don't want to pull our stunt until the last possible moment. Certainly not during daylight."

"Still think he's being too careful,"

"Don't think," Pearl said. "Just drive."

Several minutes later, Red pulled up in front of the roadside restaurant where Dent had told him to stop for dinner. He looked at the place for several seconds without cutting the motor.

"We can't get a drink in this joint," Pearl said.

Red didn't answer.

"The hell with Dent," Pearl said. "What does it matter to him where we eat? Let's find a tavern."

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"Suppose he wants to get in touch with us?" Red asked.

"Nothing to get in touch about," Pearl said. "He just didn't want us taking a drink."

Red shrugged. His instincts told him to follow Dent's instructions. On the other hand, he didn't want to start any arguments with Pearl. He was feeling a little guilty about what had happened the previous night, and he knew that when he got drunk with Pearl, he forgot himself and frequently hurt her. Now he wanted to make it up to her.

He decided that it probably wouldn't really make any difference and that he might just as well humor her.

They found a second roadhouse with a beer sign in the window a couple of miles farther down the highway. Red pulled the car in front of the place.

Red ordered beer and Pearl had a whiskey sour. They looked at the menu and then Pearl ordered a second drink.

The two drinks did something to Pearl. She was still suffering a hangover from the previous night and she had eaten little during the night. When they had entered the tavern, she had been nervous and on edge. Talking with Wilton had frightened her badly. But the two drinks seemed to bring her around. For the first time in a couple of days she was feeling all right.

Later they ordered a couple of bowls of chowder. By eight-fifteen Pearl was no longer quite sober. She wasn't drunk, but she was in a sentimental mood and she'd got around to thinking that Red wasn't such a bad guy after all. She sat at the table leaning on her elbows, looking up at him rather misty-eyed. Her knees pressed against his and now and then one of her hands would caress his arm.

It was almost a quarter to nine when Red suddenly came to and looked at his watch.

"My God," he said, "we should make the second call."

Pearl looked at him dumbly for a second, and then she leaned across the table.

"Listen, Red," she said, "listen to me for a minute. We're lettin' them make patuses out of us. Sure, I know. We're supposed to call him and tell him to stay in the barroom in East Hampton until eleven o'clock and then take a cab to Land's End Tavern. And all that time we're supposed to be there, watching him. And we're supposed to follow him to Land's End. My God, Red, can't you see

it? That's the one dangerous time. The one time when if anything goes wrong, we get picked up."

Red looked at her for a moment as though he didn't quite understand.

"But that's what Dent told us to do," he said at last.

"Sure, sure," Pearl said. "He told us to do it. But you notice he isn't doing it. No, no, no. He's playing it safe. We stick our necks out to see that Wilton isn't followed. Then when everything's safe, Cal moves in."

"Yeah," Red said. "But how else we gonna do it? How—"

"Look," Pearl said. "Nobody has to stick his neck out. If Wilton is being tailed, we'd never know anyway. Why not just call and tell him to get at Land's End Tavern at a quarter to twelve? Why take a chance on watching him and following him?"

Red wrinkled his forehead and he looked down at the table. His battered face had the expression of a man who was trying to think clearly through a problem that he found highly confusing.

"But s'pose," he began, "he is followed. We'd never know—"

"We wouldn't know," Pearl said. "But we wouldn't be nabbed, either."

Red looked at her carefully. "What'll Cal say when he finds out?"

Pearl shook her head in annoyance. "He won't find out," she said. "Don't you see, Red? I'll just go and phone now. Tell him when to be there. The only difference is, we can sit here and take it easy. We saw him with the suitcases and I've already talked with him. He's got the money, all right. So let's sit tight. We'll stay here for a while and then go back to Land's End. It'll work just as well that way."

It wasn't Pearl's logic that convinced Red in the end. It was merely his laziness. He was listening to the music and Pearl was friendly again. He was happy and he didn't want to move.

"Well, just don't let Cal know," he said at last. "Go ahead and make the call, but don't let nobody know."

Pearl went to the phone booth. If she had been completely sober she would have waited until they were ready to leave before calling.

Red smiled at her lovingly when she returned. "Well?"

"I got him," Pearl said. "Told him to be there at a quarter to twelve."

She slumped into her seat.

"Order up another, Red," she said. "We'll get out of here by ten-thirty. That's plenty of time."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Terry heard the seven o'clock broadcast. She was in the living room of the hideout, cooking food for Janie, when the announcer went on the air. Fats and Gino were at the card table playing two-handed pinoche at the time, and Dent sat on the couch reading a magazine. The moment the announcer began talking, everyone in the room stopped what he was doing.

"A definite break," the announcer said, "has come in the Wilton kidnapping case. It has been learned that Gregory Wilton, who has been missing for more than eight hours, has made contact with the kidnap gang. Although police officials refuse to confirm the report, it is understood that at this very moment negotiations are under way for the payment of the ransom money, now definitely known to be a half-million dollars, and the return of seven-year-old Janie Wilton."

"Although it is believed that police and FBI men are giving Wilton a free hand to deal directly with the mobsters, this reporter has it on unimpeachable authority that

Gregory Wilton is meeting the representatives of the gang somewhere on Long Island.

As he listened Dent's mouth tightened and his fingernails dug into the palms of his hands. Fats swore under his breath.

"It is also known," the voice continued, "that police are looking for a well-known gambler and racketeer known by the name of George 'Fats' Morn in connection with the crime. Morn is reported to have been seen early this morning in the Long Island Railroad station."

Fats jumped to his feet as though he had been shot. The card table tipped and crashed to the floor. Swiftly Dent stood up and waved him to be quiet. Gino had a sick smile around the corners of his mouth.

"While Mr. Gregory Wilton, accompanied by the family attorney, anxiously waits in her Connecticut home, the eyes of the nation are focused on what has developed into the greatest man-hunt of the century. Although it is believed the Wilton child is probably still alive and unhurt, grave fear is felt for the fate of her twenty-two-year-old nursemaid, Miss Terry Ballin. Crime experts have pointed out that the kidnappers have without doubt liquidated her in order to eliminate any possible witness.

"In spite of the efforts of the greatest collection of crime experts and man-hunters ever to get together on a single case, and the undoubted co-operation of most of the known underworld, as dusk falls tonight over an aroused city, no definite news of the—"

Dent reached up and turned off the set. He turned to Terry.

"Get in with the kid," he said.

Fats was shaking as he spoke. "Goddamn it, how the hell did they get my name? How did they connect—"

"The first phone call," Dent snapped at him. "I told you, damn it, that you should never have used your pal's joint. I told—"

"It doesn't matter now," Gino cut in. "They got it. But this Long Island deal—that I don't like a little bit."

"Listen, you guys," Dent said. "Hang on to yourselves. So they connect Fats up—but they don't know. They don't know! So they saw him in the Long Island Railroad station. But that don't mean they have anything definite."

Dent looked at his wrist watch.

"We've got less than five hours now," he said. "Five hours more and we have a half million bucks. So hang on and take it easy. Let 'em know about Fats. Let 'em know about Long Island. In another five hours we got the dough and we're on our way."

"Yeah," Gino said. "You got the dough and you're on your way. But I'm here with the girl and the kid. Why the hell don't I go in with you? Why should I stay here?"

"You stay to see the girl and the kid don't get away until we're sure we got the dough," Dent said.

"We could take care of 'em," Gino said. "We could—"

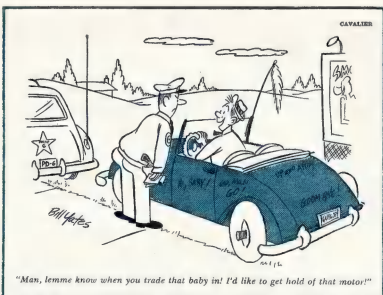
"We could," Dent interrupted. "But we're not going to. Where the hell's your brains? Suppose something should go wrong? Suppose Wilton tries a fast one and doesn't have the money, or has the wrong kind of dough? Suppose the law should have followed him? Can't you see it? As long as we got the kid, we still got a hope."

"I still don't like it," Gino said. "Why don't you or Fats stay here?"

"Look," Dent said. "We do it the way I planned it. Fats is in better shape for the job tonight, and so am I. Damn it, all you gotta do is stick tight. That's simple enough."

"Yeah, I sit tight while you guys get your hands on the dough, I sit—"

"You sit is right," Dent said. "What the hell you think we're going to do, anyway?"



"Take off and leave you here? You should be able to see it. We know to come back for you." Dent looked at the little man coldly.

"We have to come back for you," he repeated. "And I have to come back to see that that kid's all right, also," he added, a threat deep in his voice. "It's my only insurance for a clean getaway. So plan to stay here and behave yourself. And remember just one thing: Touch that kid"—he hesitated, then added, "or the girl—and you'll wish to God you'd never seen me or heard of me."

"You take care of your end," Gino said. "I'll take care of this end."

"They got my name," Fats mumbled to himself. "Damn, that's the kind of luck I play in. They have to connect me."

"So what?" Dent said. "You think they aren't going to connect us all before they're through? Of course they are. We knew that from the beginning. They connect us, but with the dough we'll have, that can be the end of it."

Fats took out a cigar and bit off the end. "I just wish it was over," he said.

"It'll be over soon enough," Dent said.

Janie, laddering a spoonful of cereal from a heavy crockery mug, looked up inquisitively at Terry. She sensed the excitement in the older girl and knew that something must be happening.

"Terry," she said between mouthfuls, "I'm getting tired of this game. I want to go home. I don't like this food anymore. And I was cold last night. You made a lot of noise and kept me awake."

Terry looked at the child for a long moment, her face gray and sick. Her wide shoulders shook slightly.

"Soon, honey," she said. "It'll be soon now."

They kept the light on until almost eleven o'clock, playing together with the kitten, and then Janie lay on the cot and listened as Terry read to her from one of the comic books. Janie kept the wooden pistol that Red had carved for her under her pillow. As Terry was tucking the child in and preparing to turn off the light, she heard sudden movement in the other room.

Gino sat with his back to the wall, the two front legs of the chair up in the air and his feet on the table. He watched Morn as the fat man carefully wrapped up the four sticks of dynamite and attached the fuse. Dent had placed the two sub guns on the table and was

strapping on his shoulder holster. He pulled a leather jacket over his shoulders and filled the pockets with extra shells.

Fats' thick fingers were amazingly delicate as he handled the explosive.

"It should do it," he said. "It should do it, all right."

"How long you figure, after you light it?" Dent asked.

"Two minutes, no more," Fats said.

Gino said, "I'll wake the dead."

"I don't care about the dead," Dent said. "I just want it to wake the local cop, and any other heroes who might be hanging around."

"How far is the place from the tavern?" Gino asked idly.

"It's the big hardware depot. You saw it if you were looking when you drove out here. I'd say a little more than two miles the other side of town."

"Is there a watchman?" Gino asked.

"No, nobody at all. That's the nice part of it. This thing will start a fire that will pull every character for miles around. Nobody has to be killed, but it will do the job fine."

Five minutes later Fats and Dent cautiously opened the front door and looked out.

Gino had his pocket watch on the table in front of him. "Twelve-twenty, at the latest," he said. "Don't be no later."

Dent mumbled something and closed the door behind them.

"Red sure did a job on this baby," Fats said as the two of them climbed into the stripped-down limousine.

Dent took the wheel.

They drove in to Land's End by the road that intersected the Montauk Highway just west of the town. When they reached the crossroads, instead of turning toward the village itself they headed west for about a quarter of a mile. Just before Dent was able to make out the outlines of the sprawling warehouse that housed the hardware storage company, he cut his lights. He was careful to see that no cars were coming.

"Keep your flash ready," he said to Fats as they pulled over to the right. Dent brought the car to a stop and then carefully turned it around. Fats pushed the flash button for a moment and swept the light in a circle around the car. Dent carefully backed under the boughs of a large maple tree several yards off the side of the road. He sat at the wheel as Morn stepped to the ground.

He was gone almost five minutes. Dent

heard the whistle just before the fat man's return and he at once started the engine. The car was moving slowly as his companion climbed in beside him.

Dent skipped second gear altogether and shoved it into high. He was hitting a good fifty miles an hour by the time he was a hundred yards along the highway.

It came just as they reached the intersecting road, leading off through the dunes to the hideaway. Dent saw the reflection of the light in the sky a split second before he heard the tremendous roar of the explosion. The car itself seemed to move sideways with the repercussion.

Fats chuckled.
"God," Dent said. "I didn't know it would be like that."

Fats laughed. "You want a distraction?"
"I got it," Dent said.

Dent kept well to his own side of the road and slowed down slightly as the twin beams of an approaching car came over a hill and rushed toward them. The sound of the siren reached him a moment later and he dimmed his own headlights as the red spotlight bore down on them, and then the car passed in a rush of wind.

"Well, he saw it, all right," Fats said.
"The whole damn town saw it," Dent said.

Within minutes five or six more cars had sped past from the opposite direction. And then, as they entered the main street of the village, it seemed as though every car in eastern Long Island were converging on the road they had just left.

Ed, the bartender at Land's End Tavern, was standing in the rectangle of light in his opened front door, looking toward the western end of town, as Dent pulled up to the curb across the street. Fats got out first, carrying the suitcase that held the submachine guns. Dent followed him and they crossed the street and entered the tavern. Ed moved over to let them in.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The beer drinkers had folded up around ten o'clock and only a half-dozen patrons were

left in the place by the time Pearl and Red arrived. They had left the other bar at twenty-five and arrived at Land's End Tavern just after eleven.

Ed looked up as they came through the swinging door, and seeing only Pearl at first, frowned. A second later, as Red followed her in, he looked relieved. He nodded a curt greeting. Red and Pearl went to the last booth along the wall. The rest of the patrons were at the bar.

Ed took his time, finishing a couple of drinks he was mixing and then methodically wiped the bar and cleaned up after himself. Almost five minutes had passed before he sidled around the end of the mahogany and came over to the booth.

"Evenin', Mrs. Mason," he said.
Pearl nodded.

"We get a couple of sandwiches and some beer?" Red asked.

"Nothing much to eat," Ed said. "We don't serve dinner here, and anyway, it's too late."

"Just a couple of sandwiches," Pearl said.
"Anything will do."

"Well," Ed said. "I guess I can make you up a couple of ham and cheeses." He didn't look as though he liked the idea.

"Fine," Red said. "That'll be fine. An' can we have a couple of beers while we're waiting?"

"I guess you can," Ed said. He turned back to the bar.

Twice Ed stopped while making the sandwiches in order to pour drinks for the men at the bar. They still talked in low, desultory tones. Ed didn't bother with their beers, but made up the sandwiches first. Then, when he had them both on a single paper plate, he drew two glasses of beer. He picked up the food and the glasses and walked back to the table.

The hands of the old-fashioned wall clock over the cash register pointed to eighteen minutes after eleven.

Red waited a few minutes and then went over to the jukebox. He put in a dime. When he came back, he squeezed in next to Pearl so that both of them sat facing the door.

"Nasty character," he said nodding toward the bar. "Thought you told me you were friendly with him."

"Listen," Pearl said. "Anybody in this town

as much as says hello, it's like they was meeting a long-lost brother."

"He won't feel so nasty in a few minutes," Red said. "I can tell you, when it happens, he'll be the first one I get."

"Don't go off half-cocked, for God's sake," Pearl said. "Remember, Cal and Fats will be carrying the ball. We're only supposed to be here just in case. Don't start anything."

At eleven-thirty Ed took out a dice box and shook with two of the remaining men. He won and they paid their tabs and left. Red had called for two more beers. He still hadn't touched his first glass.

Ed brought the drinks to the table and picked up Pearl's empty.

"We close at twelve on Saturday nights," he said.

"It's eleven-thirty," Red said.
Ed's face showed no expression. He went back behind the counter.

Ten minutes later Pearl began to feel a tremendous sense of excitement. She found it impossible to keep her eyes from the clock.

"Think he'll be here on time?" she whispered to Red.

"How the hell do I know?" Red said. "You talked to him last."

"He's got five minutes," Pearl said.

Gregory Wilton entered Land's End Tavern as the two men who had been talking with Ed finished their drinks and asked for their checks. Ed got out the dice box again.

Wilton was a tall, slender man in his mid-thirties. His face was gray with fatigue but he was immaculately dressed. He wore a pair of heavily framed tinted glasses. He pushed the door open with his shoulder. He carried a suitcase in each hand.

For a second, as he entered the room, his eyes swept the place. And then he walked all the way in and went to the booth next to that in which Red and Pearl sat.

There was no mistaking him. Red and Pearl dropped their eyes the second he entered the room.

The two men at the bar had looked up for a second and then gone back to the dice game. Ed didn't even look up.

It took around six minutes for them to finish the dice game. Again Ed won and the men paid it. They said good night to Ed as they left. Ed looked over at the stranger.

"We're closing at twelve," he said.

Wilton looked up at him blankly.

"Scotch—Scotch and soda," he said. "Make it a double, Dewar's."

It was just as Ed reached for the Scotch bottle that the sound of the explosion crashed in on the room.

Pearl jumped as though she had been shot. She had been expecting it, but in the excitement of Wilton's entrance she had forgotten. Her eyes had been following Ed.

Red half rose to his feet. Wilton looked startled, his eyes going to the bartender.

Ed was the first to come to.

"Good Lord," he said. "Now, what could that have been?" And then he walked to the door, opened it, and peered out.

Dent and Fats passed him as they entered the place.

Normally, two different parties entering with suitcases some fifteen minutes before closing time would have had Ed wondering. But that explosion had thrown everything else out of his mind. He stood in the doorway, looking at the flaming sky to the west of town.

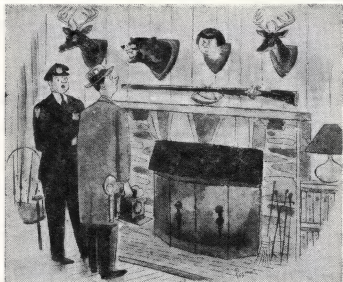
Neither Fats nor Cal Dent paid the slightest attention to Red and Pearl. They passed Ed quickly and walked to the men's room.

Wilton looked paler than ever and there was a nervous tic at the corner of his mouth. He still sat quietly; the suitcases were between his feet.

A man passed on the street and those inside the bar heard him call out.

"Explosion out at the hardware company."

CAVALIER



"No one would have suspected it wasn't an accident if he hadn't gotten so brazen about it."

he said. "Better get out, Ed. Fire truck's already on its way."

Ed turned back to the bar.

"Gotta close up," he said. "Fire out at the other end of town."

"How about the drinks first?" Red said. "No time," Ed said. "I'm a fireman in this town and I gotta get out. Closing up now." Wilton started to get to his feet.

Fats was first out of the men's room, but it was Dent's voice they all heard.

"All right," Dent yelled, "don't move. Don't anybody move. This is a stickup!"

Wilton swung around enough to face the two men standing side by side, each with a submachine gun under his arm. The broker's face went completely chalky and his bags dropped to the floor.

Ed's mouth fell open and he leaned heavily against the bar. He slowly raised his hands. Red stood beside the table and Pearl sat still as death.

"No one is going to get hurt," Dent said, "if you just take it easy." He circled slowly to the front as he talked, and Fats stayed where he was.

Red moved forward and started to say something, and Fats moved in quickly and caught him across the side of the face with the barrel of the Tommy gun. The front sight tore through the skin and left a nasty cut. Fats winked as he did it.

The damn fool, Red thought, he doesn't have to make it that good.

"You," Dent pointed with his gun at Wilton, "you're coming with us."

Pearl stood up and started to say something, but Fats moved quickly toward her and she sat down again. Red had his hand at the side of his face, wiping off the blood.

"O.K.," Dent said. "Let's start walking."

Wilton had picked up the bags and was following Dent slowly as he backed to the door. Fats was moving across the room.

It was just as Dent started to turn to reach for the door that he happened.

Jack Fanwell had his police .38 in his hand as he entered the place. The first person he saw was Cal Dent. It is doubtful if he saw Fats at all.

In spite of his police training, Fanwell made his big mistake then. Instead of shooting, he reversed the gun in his hand to bring the barrel down on Dent's head.

Fats' finger pressed the trigger, but he purposely raised his gun so as not to get Dent. The first quick series of bullets crashed across the ceiling, taking out the lights. Even as Red pulled his shoulder gun, he caught sight of the revolver in Ed's hand. He shot at Ed in the dark.

And then all hell burst loose.

The clock was striking midnight as a stream of lead silenced it forever.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The hull lasted for a full minute. The air in the room was acrid with the smell of spent gunpowder, and each person froze where he stood, in an attempt to orient himself.

Pearl's scream suddenly shattered the stillness. Thrill, her voice pitched high in hysteria, she cried out three times in rapid succession and then there was the soapy sound of a fist against raw flesh.

Dent began to edge toward the center of the room, where he had last seen Wilton and the two suitcases. Even as he moved he became aware of the roar of a speeding car and the sudden scream of hot rubber as the driver slammed on his brakes.

The reflection of twin headlights cut through the glass of the double doors and momentarily lighted the interior of the tavern. Fanwell, in a kneeling position, was raising his gun as Red's automatic spoke.

Fanwell's gun dropped and his cry was a half-choked sob as he fell forward on his face.

The headlights no longer were aimed directly at the door, but cut across it obliquely. The driver had rammed his front wheels against the curb. The room was now bathed in a dim light and Dent saw the outlines of the two suitcases standing alone and unguarded in the center of the floor.

"Cover me," he yelled at Fats, at the same time going forward and taking a bag in each hand. He had to drop his machine gun.

As he turned and started for the door, Fats reached his side. Dent was vaguely conscious of Red behind him, half carrying Pearl.

The moment the headlights from the car had struck the room, Ed had ducked behind the bar. He came up a second later, just as Dent reached the bags. The gun in his hand spoke and Dent felt a cold breath of air whistle past his ear.

Fats was firing the submachine gun as he swung around. One slug creased Ed's forehead and the shock of it hurled him backward. The next half-dozen bullets plowed into the jukebox.

There was a quick flash of colored lights as the machine shorted somewhere in its inner mechanism. A moment later there was a whirring sound and then a contralto began to sing in a husky, heartbreaking voice.

Pearl struggled in Red's arms and quickly pulled free. She was half laughing and half crying as she reached the door.

Fanwell had fallen almost across the threshold and Dent put one bag down as he dragged the policeman away from the door. He heard Fats release a burst from his gun as he straightened up. The two men in state troopers' uniforms who had been about to enter the tavern stumbled and fell.

Dent yelled at the others to hurry as he crashed through the door.

"The Packard," he cried to Fats as he started across the street. Fats had darted toward the Lincoln.

Dent heard the crash of shots once more as he reached the car. They came from the inside of the tavern.

He threw the two suitcases in the back and then climbed behind the steering wheel. He had his foot on the starter as Fats jerked open the door opposite him.

"Where's Red? Red and Pearl?" Dent yelled as he began to pull away from the curb to make a U turn in the center of the street. He had to back once to avoid the state troopers' car, which had pulled up at an angle in front of the place.

"The hell with them," Fats screamed into his car. "They must have been hit. Let's go."

Completing his turn, Dent pulled the switch for his headlights and the front of Land's End Tavern was suddenly bright in the twin beams. He saw the form of a man lying a few feet from the door.

"The bartender had a gun," Fats said. "He might have got Red."

Dent jerked the car to a halt parallel to the curb in front of the place.

"Cover me," he yelled. "I'm going back in for them."

As he spoke, Pearl staggered through the door. Blinded by the headlights of the police car, she hesitated for a brief moment. Dent grabbed her by the arm and rushed her into the back of the Packard.

And then Red backed out of the place. The trigger of his gun clicked as the firing pin fell on a spent shell. Red threw the gun with all his strength through the door and at the back of the bar. A moment later he reached the car and jerked open the door. He started to climb into the back. Dent was once more behind the wheel.

Red groaned softly and slumped to the floor.

Fats yelled into Dent's car as the engine

wound up and Dent headed west through the village.

"What happened? Did Wilton tip—" Dent kept his eyes on the road. "No," he said. "It couldn't have been Wilton. If he'd double-crossed us this town would have been loaded with FBI. It must have been a bum break."

"That was a state trooper's car outside," Fats said.

"Probably on their way to the fire when they heard the shooting," Dent said.

"Cal," Fats said, leaning close to Dent's ear, his voice pitched high in excitement, "turn and go the other way! We don't want to pass the fire now."

"Can't," Dent's words came between closely gritted teeth. "I'm going back to the hideout. They won't have the kidnapping figured yet. It's still only a stickup."

Fats looked at him wildly.

"You damn fool!" he yelled. "We got the money. For God's sake, let's get out of here while we can. The hell with the hideout."

Dent pushed Fats' arm away. His knuckles were white and bloodless as he gripped the steering wheel. And in his seething mind the thought kept repeating itself: I'm a fool, I'm a fool, I should run for it while I can.

He thought of Gino and he knew that it wasn't the sadistic little gangster that was pulling him back to the hideout. No, it wasn't Gino. Dent was as willing as Fats to desert Gino.

Ahead lay freedom. They had the money now and they had the few precious moments they would need to make an escape.

The crossroad sign loomed up ahead, and to the left were the tracks leading across the dunes to the cottage in which Gino guarded Terry and Janie Wilton. Directly ahead and straight on lay the west lay his destiny. There lay safety.

His hands tensed on the steering wheel and he pulled it sharply and the car screeched as it made the turn into the dune road.

In the back of his mind, he realized only too well that if he deserted Gino, Terry's life and Janie's would be the price paid for that desertion. That much was crystal clear. But it wasn't Terry and the child, either. He had made a plan and he wanted to stick to it.

Dunleavy would be landing the plane on that long stretch of beach by the cabin at around four o'clock in the morning.

And still, somewhere in the back of his mind, was the thought of Janie and Terry. He must try at any cost to preserve the child's life. It was his highest guarantee of a safe getaway. He swore under his breath as he asked himself again and again the same question: Was the idea of their safety influencing his decision? That spoiled little rich child and the girl with the flaming hair who had come out of a world that could never be his own... what were they to him?

Terry would have to die anyway; what did it matter if Gino were the one to do it?

Perversely, even as he asked himself the questions, his foot pressed harder on the accelerator and he held the wheel with a deadly persistency as he headed for the hideout.

"We have time," he yelled at Fats. "We still have time."

"No," Fats said. "Turn, Dent."

Dent slowed down for a second as he spoke. "We got the bartender and we got the cop," he said. "They were the only two who could have recognized Pearl and Red or any of us. No, our best chance is to get back. They won't suspect the hideout yet. We gotta see if the money's right while we still got the kid."

The hideout cottage loomed up ahead and Dent saw that the lights had been turned off. For some reason, it gave him an odd sense of foreboding. And then, as his own headlights cut across the front of the cottage, he saw the figure of Gino standing in the open

doorway. He swung the car in a short arc and jammed on the brakes. Gino ran toward him. With a strange perverseness he was later unable to understand, Dent twisted the key from the ignition and jammed it into his trouser's pocket. Gino was yelling as he came to the car.

"What happened? I heard the shots," Dent didn't answer but started for the cotage.

Fats leaped out and grabbed his arm. "Cal," he said, "Cal, are you nuts? We got Gino. For God's sake, let's go. Let's go now!"

Dent pushed him to one side and kept heading for the cottage.

Pearl followed Dent. She spoke in an undertone, almost as though she were talking to herself.

"He's bleeding all over me," she said.

Fats looked after Dent for a moment and then went back to the car. He climbed into the front seat and reached for the ignition switch. A moment later he cursed. He pulled the automatic from his shoulder holster and started after Dent. Gino was yelling at him, wanting to know what they were waiting for. Red lay in the back of the car, half on the floor.

Dent snapped on the switch at the side of the door and the overhead light flooded the room. After one quick look, he strode rapidly to the door leading into Terry and Janie's room. He swung it open, and in the dim light from the outside room he saw Terry's crumpled form lying on the floor. Janie sat on the edge of the cot, staring at him.

Quickly he reached Terry's side and his eyes took in the vicious bruise over her right eye where Gino had pistol-whipped her. Janie began to cry.

Reaching down, Dent felt Terry's pulse. He experienced an odd sense of relief as he turned and started back for the front of the house.

Pearl came through the front door. "Red's bleeding," she said.

"Grab up some rags, a sheet, anything," Dent was halfway back through the front door when he saw Fats. Fats had his gun raised.

"Are you coming?" Fats said. His voice was cold and deadly.

Dent was dimly aware of Gino as he walked toward Fats. Gino had found the suitcases on the floor of the Packard and was lugging them to the house.

Walking quickly to the fat man's side, Dent spoke in a whisper. "Don't be a damn fool," he said. "They'll have roadblocks out after all that shooting. This is the safest place we can be. And keep it quiet, but I made plans for the plane to land on the beach at four-thirty this morning."

Fats looked at Dent, surprise on his face. "The plane?" he said. "You mean Dunleavy's coming in in the dark?"

Dent nodded. "Yeah, Dunleavy," he said.

Fats turned and started for the cottage and Dent was about to follow when he heard Red groan. He turned back to see the big man's figure stagger in the mist and fall next to the Packard's front fender. Grabbing him under the arms, Dent dragged him toward the front porch.

Fats waited at the door, and as Dent pulled Red toward him, he came out and helped.

"I got him," Dent snapped. "Dim that light inside."

Fats turned back to the doorway, and as he did so, Gino clicked off the switch.

"We should blow," Fats said. "Damn it, we shouldn't have come back here. We coulda—"

"You were going to leave me?" Gino's voice was almost a whisper from across the room.

Quickly Dent spoke. "We're here, aren't we? We're here and we're safe, for the time being. The only ones who could have identified us are dead. Let's see that dough."

Red moaned and began to move on the floor where he had been dropped. Pearl sat on the couch, staring at him with unseeing eyes. Dent locked the front door.

Gino already had the suitcases on the table and had opened one of them.

Packs of bills, neatly wrapped in bank bands, spilled out on the table.

As Cal Dent moved toward the table, Fats' voice cut him short.

"All right," Fats said, "All right. Now let's hear about that plane."

Dent turned to see the automatic in Fats' hand. Gino stopped handling the money and looked up, surprise heavy on his face.

Dent shrugged his shoulders. "O.K.," he said. "It's simply this: I arranged with Dunleavy to land his plane in front of the cabin at four-thirty this morning, when the tide's out. I did it as an extra precaution in case of any trouble in making a getaway. You guys are damned lucky I thought to do it, after that gunplay tonight."

Fats still held the muzzle of the gun pointed at Dent's stomach.

"So why weren't we in on the deal?" "Listen," Dent said. "We agreed that once we got the dough, we'd split. Right? Well, I was going to take the plane. So what?"

Fats slowly lowered the gun.

"All right," he said. "But we better turn the radio on after that rumpus in town. Maybe we got a couple of hours or so. We can divvy up the money. Also, we gotta take care of that girl."

"The kid, too," Gino said. "The kid can talk, too."

"The kid don't get touched," Dent said. "My God, anything happens to the kid now and they'd tear us to pieces. And the kid's testimony won't stand up in a court, anyway. Leave the kid out of it."

"All right, the girl, then," Gino said. He started toward the back room.

"The money comes first," Dent said.

Gino hesitated a moment and then went back to the table. Fats turned the radio dial.

"Get WNEW," Dent said. "That's the News station, and they'd be the first to have it if there's anything."

A moment later a jazz band came on the air as Dent began arranging stacks of money.

Gino sat with the submachine gun cradled in his arms as Dent counted the bills. Red lay on the couch, and Pearl had swathed his face in twists of torn sheets. He was conscious and his eyes watched the others. Color had come back into his face.

Fats stood to one side. He didn't watch Dent; he watched Gino.

Dent dipped his hands deep in one of the suitcases. He lifted up neatly wrapped bundles of bills, and let them slowly fall back.

Pearl's eyes suddenly glittered. "My Gawd," she said. "Just look at it!" Her face was flushed and for the moment she forgot the hideout, the violence of the last hour, and the fear that had come over her. She was seeing the beauty parlors, the Fifth Avenue shops, the furs and the jewels that the money represented to her. Her breath came fast and she reached over and took out a bundle of fifties.

"Put it back," Gino snapped. "Put it back."

There was a greedy look on his face. Gino was having his own dreams—dreams of the secret, vicious delights that the money represented to him.

Fats looked at the money with his tiny eyes, and he too was thinking of what it would buy. He began to laugh, and the high, thin sound was insane and without meaning.

"We've done it," Dent said. "We've done it for real. The big kill. God, there's enough here for—"

Red was up on his elbow and he stared at the piles of money.

"Now," he said. "Now! Divide it now.

Gimme mine. Cut it up, Cal, cut it up!"

"Baby," Pearl said, "talk about your slow boat to China. Make mine a hot plane to Miami. My troubles are over."

"All of our troubles are over," Dent said. "This is it, by God!" He turned and looked at the others, an expression almost of defiance on his face.

"Well," he said, "was it worth it?"

Fats continued his inane laughter. Red nodded rapidly. Pearl herself reached into the suitcase and caressed the money. Gino seemed lost in a trance.

"I'll start divvying it up," Dent said. "We'll just about have time before Dunleavy gets the plane down."

He began piling the money in stacks according to denomination.

Sweat poured down into his eyes as he worked. Fats picked up a bill and carried it over under the light. He looked at it closely for a long time and the only sound he made was that odd little laugh. Finally he walked back and handed the bill to Red.

"Letture," he said. "Beautiful green let-tuce. Brother, what I'm gonna do."

"What I'm gonna do," Pearl said, and she danced around the table as she spoke, "won't be anybody's business. Who could have believed one little kid would be worth this much to anybody?"

Dent was busy with his own private thoughts. What he was going to do—the thought kept running through his mind—was just as far away from the rest of them as he could. The tenseness was deep in him, but aside from the heavy perspiration that ran from his body, he showed no outward signs of the tremendous emotional reaction that the sight of this actual money brought to him.

For the next few minutes, as the strange tableau took place in that dramatically lighted room, the suppressed excitement seemed to reach an hysterical pitch; there was something unreal and surrealistic about the five of them as they half crouched over the table, watching the money.

And then it happened.

At exactly two-fifteen the first news flash came over the air. Those in the room were so preoccupied with the ransom money that the first words were lost. It was Dent who suddenly stiffened and waved the others to silence.

Dent, and Patrolman Fanwell, badly wounded in the holdup of Land's End Tavern, recovered consciousness long enough to definitely identify two of the mobsters. Gregory Wilton is still in a coma at . . .

The machine gun fell from Gino's hands and clattered to the floor. Fats reached the table in one leap and began to toss packages of money back into the suitcases. Red started to his feet.

Dent was the first to recover fully from the shock.

"No time now for anything," he yelled. "We gotta blow. They're probably on their way out here this minute."

He swung toward the door, and even as he opened it, he saw a headlight cutting across the dunes. Gino was at his side and he raised the gun in his hands. He cut loose with a burst of shot and the car skidded to a halt several hundred yards away. As its lights were cut off, they saw the headlights of half a dozen other cars in the distance.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Dent slammed the door closed as he backed into the room.

"Pearl, snap out of it and see how bad Red is. Fats, you and Gino get at those windows. I'll be right back."

Running into the other room, he saw that

Terry had regained consciousness and was sitting on the edge of one of the cots, holding her head in both hands.

"Take care of the kid," he said. "And you better both lie on the floor. There may be shooting." He left the door to the room open as he returned to the others.

Red was sitting up and shaking his head and Pearl had torn his jacket and bloody shirt off. She was wiping his side with a wet towel. Red looked up at him and half-smiled.

"I'll be all right," he said.

Dent nodded curtly. "Can you move?"

Red started to get to his feet and Pearl pushed him back.

"I'm all right," Red said again. "Guess I lost a little blood. I'll be all right, though." He jerked suddenly as Pearl pressed the rag too hard against the open wound.

Fats turned from the window. "They're staying well out of gunshot," he said.

"O.K.," Dent said. "This will be our only chance. We'll have to make a run for it. They know about the kid, and that'll stop them for a few minutes. Right now they're not sure what to do. Get yourselves set."

Pearl looked up, fright deep in her eyes. "They'll kill us," she said. "They'll kill us."

Red pushed her away. "Shut up," he said. "We got only one chance—we gotta take it."

Dent walked to the window and pulled the curtain to one side. Several hundred yards away he saw a line of cars, their headlights trained on the house. He motioned to Gino.

"This is the way we'll do it," he said. "Get loaded up and set. I'll start picking off the headlights. That'll make them turn them off. The minute they do, we open the door and run for the car. They won't know whether we got the kid with us or not and won't dare shoot in the dark."

"So we'll take the kid," Gino said.

"No," Dent said. "We don't take the kid. There's five of us and we'll have enough trouble getting out without the kid along. They won't know in any case. Our only hope is to try to make it to the main road while they're still confused and don't know what the score is."

"They'll have the road blocked off," Fats said.

"If they do," Dent said, "we have to take our chances across the dunes."

"I still say take the kid," Fats said. "They put a spotlight on the car and we can always show them the kid."

Dent looked thoughtful for a moment.

"All right," he said, "get the kid."

"What about the girl?" Gino said.

"Get her too."

Gino carried the submachine gun, and Cal Dent had the rifle with the telescopic sight. Fats had a sawed-off shotgun under one arm. His pockets bulged with shells. Red had pulled a sweat shirt over the bandages that bound his side. His face was pale but he seemed to have regained some of his strength. He also carried a shotgun.

Pearl, holding Jane tightly by the arm, stood at the door with Terry as Dent turned off the light.

He edged the door open and, lifting the rifle, took careful aim. One headlight on the nearest car went out as the gun spoke. He shot twice more in quick succession.

"Hold your fire," he snapped at Gino as he saw the cars quickly go dark. "They got the idea."

"Come on," Red said, "let's go."

Pearl and Jane and Terry were the first out of the door. Dent followed the other three men as they approached the car.

"Fats and Gino in the front with me," he whispered hoarsely as he opened the car door. "The rest in the back."

He reached for the starter button and the sound of the motor shattered the dead stillness of the night. Dent put the car in gear.

It was just as they began to move that the



"Let's stop right here for the night—it looks about as good a place as any."

powerful spotlight flashed on and caught them full in its shimmering beam.

"Get it!" Dent yelled.

But a split second before Gino had lifted the Tommy gun, two shots cracked out in swift succession. Dent felt the thud and then heard the third explosion under the car as the front right tire went.

Gino pressed the trigger and the spotlight went off.

Dent cursed. "Got the tire," he said. "We'll never make it now. Get back to the house quick before they turn on another light."

He swung open the door of the car and then reached in back and took Jane Wilton. "Run for it," he yelled.

He heard Red stumble and curse in back of him as he reached the porch.

There were no further shots and Dent realized that the police were taking no unnecessary chances of shooting the child.

Fats was the last one to make it back to the hideout. He had to move slowly, as he carried the two suitcases with the money. He tossed them on the couch when he entered and one of them flew open.

Red staggered across the room and half fell on top of the loose money lying on the couch. The effort had been too much for him in his weakened condition and he dropped back into semi-consciousness.

Pearl looked over at him and began to laugh hysterically. "Look at him," she said, her voice high and thin. "Look at him. Lying on half a million bucks and he can't buy a short beer."

The spotlight from the police car had picked out the child in the getaway car at exactly twenty-three minutes after two on Sunday morning.

By two-thirty every police department on Long Island had been alerted. By two-forty FBI agents, as well as New York and Connecticut detectives, were racing toward Land's End. The radio announcer on an all-night disk-jockey show got the news at two-forty-five. Extra editions of the morning newspapers hit the streets less than an hour later.

By four o'clock on Sunday morning, there was hardly a person in the continental United States—at least a person who was awake and who could read or hear—who wasn't aware of what had happened.

An internationally known Broadway columnist who had picked up the first flash on his special police radio in the back of his Cadillac ordered his chauffeur to desert the

night spots and head east on Long Island. His car crashed into a taxi on the Queensborough Bridge and he was virtually decapitated. Normally this news would have rated an eight-column banner, even in the opposition newspapers. It was put on the second page.

Janie's mother, pacing the floor of her Riverside, Connecticut, home, collapsed when they gave her the news.

Gregory Wilton himself was in a hospital in Smithtown and had regained consciousness. One of Fats' bullets had creased the side of his head during the battle at the tavern. He had barely finished identifying himself to the incredulous state troopers when news reached him that his daughter was barricaded in the hideout with the kidnappers.

For those first few hours, no one was quite sure who was really in charge. The shock of the sudden disclosures had been too great for any real organization. State police had been the first to reach the scene. It was, in fact, a trooper's car from the local barracks that Dent had first sighted bearing down on the cabin. The car had been attracted from the warehouse fire by the gunfire in town. Later, the sergeant at the wheel had talked to Patrolman Fanwell.

Land's End Tavern had been left a shambles. Ed, the bartender, had been struck twice in the chest, as well as in the head. He'd gone down firing blindly. Later, when additional police arrived on the scene, they had traced a trail of blood from the spot where Red had been shot and knew that at least one of the bandits had been hit.

Reporters from news services and New York papers were on the scene well before dawn. By this time a public-address system was on its way and floodlights were being temporarily set up.

No attempts to fire on the highway or close in on it had been made. Strict orders had been received from both the FBI and the head of the state police to that effect, with the discovery that the Wilton child was trapped in the cabin. It wasn't until well after dawn, on Sunday morning, that it was learned that the Ballin girl was still alive.

The police had arrested Dunleavy after Wilton had told about his trip out to the Island. The announcement of his arrest came at four-thirty to the minute, at the exact time he was supposed to be landing on the beach in front of the hideout. Dunleavy himself had by that time already heard of the siege at the cabin; he was driving to Smithtown to

Ann Caplan

take a train and get out of the neighborhood when they got him.

By this time there was a New York City police boat cruising a half mile offshore, two police helicopters circled far overhead, and an army of detectives and government men had converged on Land's End. Every highway from the city leading out toward Monks was blocked by the curious. Police had thrown up a half-dozen roadblocks in an attempt to keep the morbid away from they were ineffectual. The greatest crime story of modern times had burst wide open.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Of all those in the hideout, Cal Dent had the only clear conception of the magnitude of the event.

Long before dawn, he realized that no effort would be made to bother them so long as it was dark. He knew full well that only the safety of the child prevented the police from making a full-scale raid with tear gas and machine guns.

He ordered Fats to take his position at a window in the front of the house, facing the driveway to the coast. He sent Gino into Terry and Janie's room, where he would be able to watch the south and west. The north wall was blank and would have to take care of itself.

Terry had bandaged her head where Gino had used the barrel of his gun. She sat in the center of the living room, Janie on her lap. The child had finally fallen asleep.

Dent turned the lights on and drew the shades. He began to take inventory.

One submachine gun had been left at the tavern, but they had almost a thousand rounds of ammunition for the other one. Gino had the rifle with the telescopic sight. There were two sawed-off shotguns, but few shells for them. And all four men carried either revolvers or automatics and all had plenty of ammunition.

Dent had less than a half bottle of whisky left. He had given them each a drink and then he had used a little extra in bringing Red around. Food was short. There was enough for about one full meal.

Money? Spilling out of two opened suitcases on the table in front of the fireplace was half a million dollars. Dent's lips twisted in a very grin as he looked over at the money.

Red was sprawled out on the couch. He had lost a lot of blood, but he felt a lot better.

Twice Red had suggested making another break for it while it was still dark. Each time Dent had carefully explained to him that they wouldn't have a chance.

"You gotta see it, Red," Dent said. "There's no way out now. You could never shoot yourself past the roadblocks. And even if you did, how far do you think you'd get?"

"But it's still dark," Red said.

Dent had reasoned with him much as he would have reasoned with a child. Finally he said, "Look, Red, leave it to me. We can still beat the game, but from now on, it's going to take brains, not muscle."

"Your brainwork hasn't been so good so far," Fats said. "We should have blown when we had the chance."

"We'd never have made it," Dent said. "We got a bad break, that's all. Who the hell could have figured on that cop busting in on the party?"

Pearl sat next to Red on the couch and said nothing. There was a peculiarly dazed look about her eyes and she seemed to be suffering a sort of aftereffect of shock. It wasn't quite clear in her mind exactly what had happened.

Gradually one idea was beginning to emerge, crystal clear, in Pearl's mind. The idea of getting away. Pearl was no longer in-

terested in the kidnapping, or the possible ransom money. The gunplay and violence of the last few hours had utterly destroyed her morale. Even the thought of arrest and prosecution came to her as a relief.

Her desire for Cal Dent, her old longing for freedom and money and luxuries—everything was submerged in that one intense longing to escape the terror and bloodshed that she had now convinced herself would be the ultimate and inevitable end of the siege. From the very moment that their plans had gone wrong, when Fanwell interrupted the stickup at Land's End Tavern, Pearl had been convinced that every hope was over.

Dent was quick to sense her condition and shortly before dawn he told Fats to take her upstairs and try to make her sleep. Fats shrugged and obeyed. He had to carry her. Red limped up after them.

Once they had put Pearl on top of the bed and she had turned her face to the wall, quietly sobbing, Red went into the other room and threw himself down on Dent's cot. He stretched out with one arm under his head. He yawned and dozed off, his mouth wide open and his expression placid.

Pure physical and emotional exhaustion should have brought Red to sleep, but the sound of Red's snoring served to irritate her enough to make sleep impossible.

Back downstairs, Fats sat peering out between a crack made where the curtain failed to close the space at the side of the window. His tiny eyes were puckered and alert; he watched for any possible movement. But his mind was busy with other problems.

Gino kept an alert eye on the dark shadows beyond the window and his mind was a caldron of bitterness and hatred as he waited for the dawn. He wished that Dent had let him have the submachine gun instead of the rifle. With the Tommy gun he would have been able to make a clean sweep of it.

Cal Dent had first arranged his defenses and then, noticing Terry and the child, told the girl to lie down on the couch in the living room.

"I want you both in this room," he said, "in case I need you in a hurry."

Terry stared at him, wide-eyed, but followed his orders without a word. Janie had awakened as she was being moved, and then returned to sleep almost at once.

Later Dent stood next to the radio. Bulletins were being released on an average of every ten minutes. Most of the news was erroneous in detail, but right in its broad overall coverage. Dent kept his eyes turned very low and after a while he only half listened. He was busy reviewing the entire situation.

He realized that his main problem lay outside of the cottage, but that the problem was something over which he had only limited control. He was smart enough to understand that the people within the cottage constituted a problem almost as involved as the one without.

Pearl, he knew at once, could be discounted as far as assistance was concerned. Her only value, from this point on, lay in the fact that she was a neutral quality. But while he would not be able to count on her for help, she wouldn't be in the way.

Of the others he was happiest about Red. Red would follow him with a blind, unreasoning loyalty.

Gino was the most dangerous. The moment things began to look really bad—the very second when Gino decided that their chances were hopeless—that's when he'd blow his top. And Gino would try to take as many with him as he could. From the very beginning he had hated the child and the girl. He blamed the child in particular for his fight with Red. Gino could, at any moment, go berserk.

That was one reason that Dent had given him the rifle. A man with a rifle, at close

quarters, is not too difficult to overpower.

Gino presented a second potential danger. Dent had the fullest intentions of negotiating with the police. They would probably be at close range. If Gino blew up and started shooting, it could wreck everything.

Fats Morn was, in a sense, a fairly safe bet. Fats would play along, at least for the time being. Fats was a gambler and he knew what he had to win and what he had to lose. He'd try everything before he gave up. But Fats, like Gino, was trigger-happy. Fats had courage. From now on, Dent realized, physical courage would be a drug on the market. What was needed now was moral courage. If they were forced into a waiting game, and it was inevitable that it would come to that, they would need more than sheer guts. They'd have to be smart.

Dent began to formulate plans for his ultimate breakout. True, they had an ace in the hole in the youngster. But they would still, sooner or later, have to figure a plan for their final escape. He didn't doubt for a moment that police would hold off as long as it was a matter of protecting the child. And he believed firmly that a deal could be worked out so that they would be given some sort of head start, probably with the woman money. The trick was much in making the first step toward freedom; the trick was in ensuring that they made a clean getaway.

For a moment Dent entertained the idea of bargaining to take the child and the money both on their first leg. But his intelligence told him that the police, and probably the youngster's family as well, would never take that sort of gamble. From Wilton's point of view, they had double-crossed him at the time of the first contact, when they had stuck up the Land's End Tavern. Wilton would never believe that it had been Dent's intention to free the child.

No, it was going to be a tricky deal, negotiating with them from now on.

The shooting at the tavern had had one other disastrous effect. Dent realized, it wasn't only that they were backed into a dead end. For the first time the entire nation was in the act. From now on there was public opinion to contend with. Every man and woman in the country had automatically become a man-hunter. Things were completely in the open. It would no longer be a case of dicker with a grief-stricken and worried family, whose one single thought was the safe return of their child. It was, Cal Dent suddenly realized, himself against the whole country.

Well, Dent reflected, he was a criminal, wasn't he? It had always been him against society. The only difference was that now the other side realized the identity and the location of his enemy.

Dent's mouth was a hard straight line as he thought about it. He was more determined than ever to win.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

At five-thirty Sunday morning, the first direct appeal over the radio was made.

Colonel W. F. Newbold, in charge of the Connecticut State Police, in whose jurisdiction the kidnapping had taken place, acted as the spokesman. For fifteen minutes before he came on the air, radio announcers on all major metropolitan stations had requested that the kidnapers stand by, in case they were listening.

When Colonel Newbold himself went on the air, he first asked that the kidnapers signal by flashing the house lights on and off if they were listening.

Fats had been against making any sort of answer, figuring a possible trap, but Dent had ignored him and turned the light switch.

It must have taken several minutes for the Colonel to be reached by those watching the house.

When he went back on the air he said: "I understand you are listening in to this broadcast. We want you to know that your helicopter is completely surrounded and that any hope of escape is impossible. No one will be able to get six feet from the house and still live. Every road for miles around Land's End has been blocked.

"Release the Wilton child and the Ballin girl and I will personally guarantee you safe custody and a fair and impartial trial. You will be given every possible consideration.

"This is your only chance. You are being given until eight o'clock this morning to reach a decision. At that time, open the front door and come out of the house in single file. Keep your hands above your heads. No shots will be fired and you will be taken into safe custody and at once transferred to a place where you will be given the opportunity of consulting attorneys.

"Any other course than this will lead to disaster. For your benefit as well as the benefit of the persons you hold prisoners, I plead with you to follow these instructions.

"You have until eight o'clock this morning to reach a decision."

Fats turned from the window and laughed. "Yeah—safe custody. Opportunity to consult our lawyers. Why, damn it, they'd tear us limb from limb."

Dent nodded. "They want to dicker," he said. "That's good. At least they know the spot they're in, as well as the spot we're in. One thing, you notice he didn't say what they'd do if we didn't give up. That's the kicker in the whole thing. That's what's got 'em stopped. They'd threaten if they dared to threaten. But by God, if we can't get out, at least they can't get in!"

Gino put his head around the door. "They can starve us out," he said.

Dent laughed. "Don't be a damn fool. They can't starve us without starving the kid. You think they're going to let her suffer?"

"Cops," Gino said. "Cops! Sure they'd let her suffer. They'd let her die. They don't care, just they get us."

"You're a fool," Dent said. "You might, but they wouldn't. Remember, everybody in the country is in on this. This time the cops got to act human."

"Cal's right," Fats said. "Whatever they do to us they're doing to the kid. Shoot at us, and they're shooting at the kid. Use tear gas on us, they also use it on the kid."

"It isn't only that," Dent said. "They could use the gas on us and figure to revive the kid once they broke in. Except for one thing: They'd be afraid we'd kill the kid before they ever got here."

"Afraid?" Gino said. "They could bet on it!"

Dent looked at him coldly. "Better get back to the window," he said.

At five-forty-five they turned on the floodlights.

The suddenness of it brought Dent whirling from where he was standing, by the fire-place. A sawed-off shotgun was in his hand as he reached Fats' side.

There must have been at least two dozen of them, and apparently the police had sneaked around on all sides of the cabin to place them in the dark.

The concentrated light was blinding in its intensity. It was as though the beach cottage had suddenly been transplanted to the center of Yankee Stadium during the middle of a night ball game. Outside the cottage, and for a distance of a hundred yards in every direction, it was as light as though the sun were at its zenith. Beyond the lights was the gloom, sparkled with hundreds of pin points of light where cars had drawn up a mile or so away from the cottage.

Gino rushed in from the other room.

"Hell," he said, "what's this?"

"Floodlights," Cal said. He was quick to recover his wits. "Nothing to worry about."

"I can get 'em," Gino said. "I can pick 'em off, one by one." He lifted the rifle with the telescopic sight.

Quickly Dent pushed the barrel toward the floor.

"Don't be a fool. So you pick them off and what good is that? It'll soon be daylight anyway. Let them have their lights. It's better for us, anyway. At least no one can come within shooting distance without being seen. So what difference does it make? It changes nothing. We couldn't get away anyhow, and they still can't get in here."

Gino turned and went back to the other room. As he went his eyes fell on Terry and Janie, lying under a blanket on the couch. There was a mean look about his mouth.

Terry had dozed off in a fitful sleep and the sudden flash of lights had brought her wide awake. Janie stirred restlessly in her sleep. Terry tightened her arm about the child and lay still. She listened as the others talked.

Upstairs, Red leaped off the bed as though he had been shot. He shook his head like a fighter who had taken a left jab to the jaw. And then, without looking out the window, he staggered toward the stairway and started down.

Pearl, too, came wide awake. She had only just fallen asleep, but as the room was suddenly bathed in illumination, her large blue eyes opened wide and she lay dead still, staring slightly at the ceiling. It took her a minute or so to realize where she was. And then, believing only that she had been sleeping, and had awakened after sunup, she turned restlessly and put her arm over her face. A few moments later she was gently snoring. One stocking was torn and she hadn't bothered to remove her high-heeled shoes.

Gino was back at the window by the time Red lumbered into the room. Red yawned deeply and said, "What the hell?"

Fats turned and stared at him.

Dent shrugged his shoulders. "Floodlights," he said.

"Yeah," Red said. "My side hurts," he added. "I should have a doc."

"You're lucky to be alive," Dent told him. "You lost some blood, but I don't think you have to worry. Anyway, there won't be any doctors for anyone. You're more likely to need an undertaker. We'll make up some breakfast and you'll feel better."

Fats talked over his shoulder and told Red about the broadcast. Red nodded, but he wasn't quite sure what it was all about.

"Cal," he said, after looking out the window intently for several minutes, "how the hell we gonna get outa this one?"

"Leave it to me," Dent said. "Peel some spinach and I'll get the coffee going."

"When't we have the dames do it?" Red asked.

"Leave 'em sleep," Dent said. "I don't want 'em around till we need 'em."

He went over to the sink and washed out the coffee pot.

The sun came up just after seven o'clock and quickly burned off the mist. The floodlights were extinguished and Dent went to the window with the field glasses. His breath came fast as he looked.

The police had done a swift and efficient job of it. There must have been at least fifty patrol cars that he was able to see. Sandbag barricades had been placed at strategic points. Dent noticed two men, several hundred yards off, stringing wire. He figured they were putting up a loud-speaker system. Far off across the dunes Dent saw what looked at first like a black cloud. He re-

adjusted the glasses, studied the cloud. . . .

"My God," he said. "There must be fifty thousand people out there."

Fats, at his side, laughed. "They'll be putting up hot-dog stands next."

"They're keeping 'em well away," Dent said. "I guess they figure there can still be a little gunplay."

"There still will be," Fats said, "if they start moving in."

Gino looked in from the other room. "So what happens at eight o'clock?" he asked. "What happens then, when we don't give up the kid?"

"I start negotiating," Dent said. "The first thing I want is some food. I want some more medical supplies. I want some whisky."

Red looked at him with his mouth open. "What for, for God's sake?" he said. "We want out, don't we?"

"Yeah, we want out. But we got to plan it. It isn't going to be good enough to get out. I got to figure some way to get out and get at least a running start."

"They ain't gonna give you no start at all," Gino said.

"Yes, they will," Dent said. "As soon as they're sure we won't give up and that we won't give up the kid, they'll start listening to reason. You'll see."

"Let's have the breakfast," Gino said. "Better bring mine back here."

It was during the seven-thirty news broadcast that the police released the information that they knew the identity of Cal Dent. They had found his fingerprints on the sub-machine gun abandoned at Land's End Tavern. They correctly guessed that he was the ringleader. Eyewitness descriptions of Fats tallied with the officials' original suspicions and they properly tagged him as a definite member of the gang.

Pearl and Red were still being referred to as Mr. and Mrs. Mason. Up to this point, they had no idea how many more persons constituted the mob. The fact that Pearl had mentioned a brother-in-law convinced them that there was at least one more person involved.

"They know everything," Gino sneered as the broadcast finished. "The only thing they don't know is how to get the kid back."

As soon as Red had finished his breakfast, Dent sent him into the back room to take Gino's place. He walked over then to Terry and shook her by the shoulder. Terry looked up at him. Her face was very pale.

"Take the kid and get in the other room," he said.

Terry nodded and stood up. She awakened Janie, who had slept through the last few hours, and quivered as though she were in her own bed at home.

Terry started to shut the door, but Dent ordered her to leave it open. A few minutes later he heard Red and the child talking in whispers.

As the hour hand approached eight, everyone in the room felt an increased sense of nervousness. Even Dent wasn't sure. Eight had been set as the deadline. He wondered what the next step would be.

At five minutes before the hour, Pearl came downstairs. Her lipstick was smeared and there were blue smudges under her eyes. The flesh of her cheeks was tight and without color. She looked more dead than alive.

Dent, wanting to prepare her for whatever was to happen, quickly told her about the broadcast.

As Pearl drank a cup of coffee, Dent watched the police cars through the field glasses. He noticed sudden activity up and down the line. Most of the policemen and officials were carefully keeping out of sight. Activity seemed to center around a large truck with a pair of loud-speakers on its roof.

They had all been expecting it, but when the sounds suddenly burst on the clear morning air, everyone in the room jumped. The

voice came distinctly from the sound truck.

"It is three minutes to eight, Dent," the voice said. "In exactly three minutes we want you to start coming out of that door. Come out in single file with your hands in the air."

Red was still in the back room with Terry and Janie, but Gino and Fats and Pearl stared at Dent. Dent himself walked over to the mantel. He took out a pen and a piece of scratch paper. Carefully he wrote:

"We want six more hours. The child and the girl are unhanded. If you want to keep them that way, don't rush us and don't make a wrong move."

He folded the paper several times and inserted it in the neck of an empty Coca-Cola bottle.

"Bring the kid in," he said.

No one moved.

"Fats," Dent said. "Get the kid in here."

Fats went to the back room and a moment later returned with Janie Wilton.

Janie looked frightened.

"Listen," Dent said. "You are going to walk out on the porch with me. Then I am going to throw this bottle. Then we're coming back in. Don't cry and don't call out."

He took Janie by the arm and for a second tears started to come to her eyes. Terry stood in the doorway watching, fright heavy in her face.

"Don't take her," she said suddenly. "Don't. God, haven't you done enough?"

"Shut up," Dent said. "She won't be hurt unless someone fires—and they won't."

Janie was wide-eyed as Dent opened the front door. Fats and Gino each sat at a front window, guns tucked under their arms. Pearl and Terry stood together near the center of the room, breathlessly watching. Red stood in the doorway between the two rooms. He muttered under his breath.

Dent leaned low and held the child in front of him as he opened the door. He pushed Janie out and stood directly in back of her.

"Am throwing a message," he yelled.

"Have one man come and get it. We won't shoot."

A second later his arm came up and he flung the bottle.

"One man, unarmed," he called. "More than one and we shoot."

He quickly backed into the room, pulling Janie after him.

Both Pearl and Terry let out a long, deep sigh. Janie suddenly began to cry, and Terry hurried her into the back room. Red followed them.

There was no movement for several minutes, and then a lone man carefully stepped from behind one of the police cars. He had stripped off his jacket and was in his rolled-up shirt sleeves. Carefully holding his arms well out from his sides, he walked toward the house. Watching him through the field glasses, Dent could see the beads of sweat on his forehead as he came up to the point where the bottle had landed in the sand. The man reached down and picked it up. He was half running as he returned to the police line.

"What good is that?" Fats asked. "So what, we got a little time."

Dent swung on him, anger in his voice. "Listen," he said. "We need time. We gotta have time. We gotta figure some safe way out of this. We must plan every last detail. Another thing, I wanted to see just how far we could go. What they'd do once they had me in their sights. I proved one thing, if nothing else. They're not going to take any chance on the kid's getting hurt. That's what I wanted to find out and I found out. We're holding the cards in this game; the trick now is how well we play them. For that I need time."

"Time!" Pearl screamed the word. "Time

to die, that's what you'll get. That's what we'll all get. I want to get out of here. I don't care what they do to me. I don't want to be shot."

She sat down suddenly on the couch and started to cry.

"For God's sake, somebody get her up stairs," Dent said. "I'm trying to think."

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

They had talked it over for hours, but they still hadn't got anywhere.

Fats still held out for what he considered the simplest and safest plan. He wanted to use Janie and Terry as hostages, get into the Packard, which still stood some fifteen feet from the front door, and make a run for it.

"One thing would be sure," he said. "They'd never dare shoot so long as we had the girl and the kid with us. At least we'd have a chance to get away from here."

"What, with a flat tire, for God's sake?" Dent said. "You think they're going to just sit there and watch us change it?"

"It would get us out of here and we can jack the first car we come to," Fats said. There was no conviction in his voice.

"No," Dent said. "No, we wouldn't even get a good start. Do you see that mob out there? Do you realize that they're more dangerous than all the police in the country? The cops will stay clear of us as long as we have the kid. But once that mob start running wild and nothing on God's earth would be able to stop them."

"There's no answer," Gino said. "For me, the best answer is to stay right here and shoot it out. We can't get away, so let's take as many of 'em with us as we can."

Pearl, sitting on the couch and staring at the floor, looked up at Gino, fear deep in her eyes.

"Give up and take our chances," she said.

"Give up, while we're still alive."

"And spend the rest of our lives behind bars? The hell with that," Red said. "We'd be lucky to get life. I think Fats has the right idea."

"None of you are thinking," Dent said. "There must be an out if we can only figure it. Let's break it down this way: Getting out by car is fine, up to a point. But it's too big a gamble. There is also the sea and there is the air."

"You expect them to supply us a boat?" Gino asked. "Don't make me laugh."

"They could," Dent said. "Only trouble is, there's no way a boat could land in this surf. No, a boat is out."

"And where do we get another plane?" Fats asked.

Gino sneered. "Dent," he said, "you're crazy. You think those cops are going to help you make a break? You think—"

"Listen," Dent interrupted. "Right there I think you got it. I think that's the very angle we have to play. So we can't figure an out—well, let's let them figure an out. Let's put it up to them for a change. We got the kid and they want the kid—unhurt. We want to make a clean getaway—also unhurt. All right, we'll just send them a note and tell them to figure out the angle."

"They'll never play ball," Fats said.

"What have we got to lose?" Dent asked. "Nothing. If it don't work, we can always try your idea. We can always try for a getaway using the kid as a shield."

"And we can always shoot it out," Gino said, "where that don't work."

"We'll try it my way," Dent said. "I'll get a note ready."

Pearl had been watching the men as they talked and she suddenly stood up. She walked over toward Dent.

"Cal," she said. "Cal, let me take the note

over. I can't help here any more. I want to give up. I want to get out of here. I don't care what they do with me. I can't take any more of this."

"You're nuts, Pearl," Red said, speaking from the doorway leading into the other room. "For God's sake, sit down. Ain't nobody gonna leave here."

Dent looked at the girl thoughtfully. He was thinking. Why not? What harm could it do, letting her go? God knows, it was going to be hard enough for the rest of them to make the break. If she wanted to give up, what difference would it make? He stood up and started toward Red.

"So what?" he said. "So maybe . . ."

Suddenly Pearl realized that every eye in the room was on Dent. In that split second, her nerves finally gave way completely. There was an insane look on her face as she quickly turned and reached for the latch to the front door. She pulled it open. She was half crying and half screaming as she started running.

Red was the first to realize that she was making a break for it. He pushed Dent aside and was out of the door like a streak.

"Pearl! Come back, Pearl!" he yelled as he stumbled across the porch, his hand out to grab her.

Fear, hysteria, whatever it was gave her a sudden insane strength. In a burst of energy, she ran like some wild thing.

Dent had reached the door and stopped. As he watched he saw that Pearl was trying to outdistance Red. But Red wasn't turning back. It was as Dent swung the door closed and turned back into the room that the crash of the Tommy gun cut the sudden silence.

He looked up to see Gino take the weapon from his shoulder.

Dent was cursing under his breath as he reached the window and tore the gun from the man's hands. And then, looking out, he saw Pearl's body lying crumpled some two feet in front of the Packard. Red had fallen a couple of yards closer to the house.

Fats stared open-mouthed.

Dent turned back from the window and carefully pulled the revolver from his shoulder holster.

Gino stood near the center of the room. "Nobody's getting out of here unless I go with 'em," he said. "Nobody."

For a long second Dent stared at him. He lifted the gun in his hand slowly.

"You're crazy," he said.

His index finger pressed the trigger as the words left his mouth.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

He was dead tired; as exhausted as he had ever been in his life. For more than forty-eight hours he'd been completely without sleep. His eyes were rimmed with red and there were dark patches under them. He had been staring out of the front window as dawn broke. One of the first things he noticed was that the bodies of Pearl and Red still lay where they had fallen.

They had taken the television cameras away sometime during the night; probably after Fats had sent the rifle bullets in their direction. The loud-speakers were still there, the police were still there, but the crowds massed in the distance had been dispersed or drawn farther back.

They had reached a stalemate and Dent knew it. From the moment when Gino had shot down Pearl and Red, he had realized that any ultimate compromise was out of the question. Up until that point, he had hoped that something might be worked out. But the staccato crack of those machine-gun bullets had put a period to any such hopes.

There were, of course, still Terry and the Wilton child. Their safety, in the eyes of the

law, was still the only important consideration. But the thing had passed the stage of being a simple kidnapping. Desperadoes they had always been. Now they were desperadoes with blood on their hands, and there was probably no doubt in anyone's mind that more blood would flow.

Several times during the night the police had pleaded with them to give up. Once Janie Wilton's mother herself had gone on the air, begging the kidnapers to release her child. Dent had not answered. There was no answer.

Early Monday morning, Fats had gone up to sleep. He took the submachine gun with him. Dent had realized that Fats no longer trusted him.

Once, during the early hours of the morning, Dent had walked back into the other room and stared for a number of minutes at Janie as she lay sleeping on the cot. The child's hair was covering one eye and she lay on her back with her arms spread wide. Terry had covered her with a heavy blanket.

As Dent looked at the child, he was aware of the older girl's eyes on him.

"It won't be long now," he said. And then, a moment later, he wondered why he had said it.

Fats was back downstairs by seven-thirty. He hadn't shaved during the last two days and there was a short, unhealthy-looking stubble on his pudgy face.

"We're out of food," Fats said after a while. "Out of food, out of liquor, even out of coffee. It's time we got out of here ourselves."

"All right," Dent said. "All right, let's do something about it. But first, let's get it smart. Let's get something to eat, and a bottle of whisky. Then, after we've rested up a bit, we'll make the break."

"You're crazy," Fats said. "Let's make the break now. How the hell are we getting whisky and food, huh?"

"The kid needs food, too," Dent said. "There'll be food in food for her."

"Send it in?" Fats asked. "How?"

"Send it in," Dent said. "Send it in," Dent said. "Send her out with a note. Give her a deadline. If she isn't back within an hour..."

Fats threw his cigarette butt on the floor and stood up.

"You're nuts," he said. "Send her out and that'll be the last of her. They'd never let her come back and she'd never want to come back."

"Look," Dent said. "We have nothing to lose. The kid is the one they're interested in. If we try for the break, we're better off with only her to worry about. So we got nothing to lose. Let the girl go with a note. If she comes back, then we get the grub. If she doesn't, we make the break anyway."

For several minutes they argued and gradually Fats came around to Dent's way of thinking. He was hungry, and the idea of food, and possibly whisky, appealed to him. Dent wrote out the note. He made it simple and to the point. He asked for the whisky and food and told them they'd give the girl exactly sixty minutes. If she hadn't returned by then, they'd come out shooting with the child. He carefully folded the note and went into the other room.

Terry was quietly talking with Janie.

"You're going out," he said, his voice harsh. "I want you to take this note and deliver it. I'm sending you for food. Food and booze. You want this kid to eat, you'll come back with it. Get ready."

Janie started to cry as he turned on his heel.

Terry spent several minutes whispering to the child, and then she came into the other room. Fats watched her as she crossed the room.

"Take this," Dent said, and handed the girl a white towel. "Keep it in your hands and



your hands over your head. Once you get out on the porch, walk straight to the nearest police car."

He stepped through the doorway with the girl and suddenly he leaned close to her. Quickly he spoke in an undertone that he was sure couldn't be heard by Fats.

"Don't come back," he said. "Don't come back. There's nothing more you can do now."

He gave her a push and ducked back into the room.

Fats looked over at him, his lips twisted. "That's the last you'll see of that dame," he said. "She won't come back."

Dent shrugged. "We'll see," he said. He picked up the field glasses. He watched through the curtains as Terry made her way across the yard. She cut a wide circle around the Packard and the two bodies lying near it.

Holding the towel over her head, the girl then made a straight line for the row of police cars. Dent watched as she neared them. She never changed her slow steady pace. He knew that only a superhuman effort could keep her from breaking into a run. Well, she had guts, all right.

Moments later he turned back to the room. They would have an hour, and in that sixty minutes he must make his plans. Fats didn't believe the girl would return. He alone knew that she wouldn't.

At the end of forty-five minutes, Fats spoke. "Well," he said, "fifteen minutes more. So how we going to work it?"

"I'll take the kid and go first," Dent said. "I'll keep a gun at the back of her head. They'll have glasses on us, and they'll know that at the first shot, the kid's life won't be worth a damn. You take the money and follow me. We'll get into the car. I'll get in back with the kid. You can drive."

The idea's all right," Fats said. "Only I'll keep the gun on the kid. I won't hesitate. And you drive."

It wasn't what Dent wanted, and they argued it back and forth for several moments. At last, Dent, realizing he had no logical objections to offer, agreed to the latter plan.

"O.K.," he said. "I'll take the Tommy gun and the money. You can carry the shotgun and a revolver."

"Why don't I take the Tommy gun?" Fats said.

"You'll have your hands full with the kid," Dent said. "And for God's sake, remember one thing: Make one false move and we're all through. You gotta keep the kid between them and us. And don't let your hand slip. Our lives depend on her." He looked at his watch again. "Five more minutes," he said.

Turning toward the mantel, Dent started to take down the submachine gun. Fats had walked over to the window, when suddenly he swung on his heel.

"Well, for God's sake!" he said.

Dent ran to look out.

Terry Ballin, a large package under her left arm and the white towel in her right hand, was walking back toward the hideout.

Time stood still for Cal Dent as he crouched motionless in the window and watched the girl's slow return to the cottage. His mouth worked, but he was unconscious of speaking as he muttered, "Oh, God. Oh, God, the fool! The blind, damned, insane fool." Over and over he repeated the words in an inarticulate monotone.

Why was she doing it? Why was she coming back when he had ordered her not to? She must have known in her heart that only violence and death awaited her in the cottage.

And then this man Dent, who from his earliest childhood had lived by the law of the jungle, who had forever worshipped up at the altar of greed and selfishness, who had been aloof from all men and all women, this man had a strange and unusual thought.

She has loved; that was the thought in his mind. A love beyond selfishness and the need for safety. Love beyond fear or desire.

For the first time in his entire life, Cal Dent understood something about the human heart that he had never heretofore known.

He watched her and he also thought: God.

what courage she has! Would I have as much if I were in her shoes?

Dent unlatched the door and Terry entered. Slipping her package on the table, she handed Dent an envelope.

Janie was calling Terry from the other room and the girl turned and went to her as Dent tore open the note. He watched over his shoulder as he read it.

We have sent the food and a bottle of whisky, as you requested [he read]. We have permitted Miss Ballin to return, in order to assure you of our fair intentions. We are ready to make a deal. Release the child unharmed and all police will withdraw from within sight of the house. The moment the child is released we will call off every person within two miles. You still have the car and the money. You will then be free to make your getaway. In order to assure you doubly of our fair intentions, Miss Ballin is willing to go with you with the understanding that you will release her unharmed once you have reached a principal highway. You will have an hour to reach a decision. If you have failed to do so in that time, we must take our chance and attack.

The note was signed by Colonel Newbold and Gregory Wilton.

"They're liars," Fats said. "Liars. Let the kid go and they'll come in shooting, girl or no girl."

"We'll still have the girl," Dent said. "The hell with the girl," Fats said. "It's the kid they want. Hell, if they'd cared anything about the girl, they'd never have sent her back in the first place."

Dent didn't answer, but walked over to the table and began to unwrap the package. He took out a loaf of bread, a quarter pound of butter, and some cold cuts. There was a fifth of rye and a quart of milk. He called to Terry, "There's some grub here for the kid."

He used his thumbnail to open the whisky bottle. Walking to the sink, he reached for two shot glasses and a water glass. He went back to the table and set down the glasses, and then poured two drinks. Then he filled the water glass with water.

"We'll have a drink," he said, "and talk it over."

As he put the glass to his lips, Dent's mind was in a complete turmoil. He knew that Fats wouldn't change his mind; that he still wanted to follow the first plan and use the child as well as the girl for a shield in attempting to make the break. And Dent knew that it wouldn't work.

A good man with a telescopic sight on a high-powered rifle would be able to cut them down before they could even see a target to shoot at. Even Fats, holding a gun on the child, could be slain before he would have a chance to pull the trigger. Of course, it would be a risk. But Dent firmly believed the police would take that risk before they would let them clear out with the child.

No, it wouldn't work. And even if it did work, by some miracle, Dent had finally realized that they would have no hope of making a final break. Every cop in the country would be watching out for them. Yes, they might get back to the highway, all right, but then what? Where could they go from there? It was, Dent realized at last, hopeless.

He poured a second drink and was suddenly aware that Fats had crossed the room and was stuffing his pockets with money. He used one hand; in the other was an automatic.

And then he knew. Time had run out on him. Now it was no longer a matter of the police and the federal men and those others. It was a matter of the man in this room with him.

Backing slowly across the room toward the door leading into the back bedroom, Dent spoke casually.

"Guess I'll go and get some of that grub," he said. He deliberately turned his back. The couch was alongside the wall next to the door. Dent had carelessly tossed the Tommy gun on the couch the last time he had held it. As he swung to the doorway, he suddenly stooped down and reached. A second later he leaped into the back room and quickly slammed the door after himself.

He heard Fats curse.

For the next few moments there wasn't a sound in the place. And then Dent spoke to Terry in a harsh whisper, half turning his head.

"Get over in the far corner," he said. "Quick. Take the kid with you and get down on the floor. Pull the table over in front of you."

Janie started to say something, but Terry quickly put her hand over the child's mouth and pulled her away from the center of the room.

Fats' voice reached them.

"What the hell are you pulling, Cal?" he called. "What goes on here?"

Dent quickly turned to see that the girl and the child were out of the line of fire from the door. Then he called out.

"I'm coming out," he said. "I'm coming out and I'm coming ready to shoot. When I kick this door open, I want you standing in the center of the room, with your hands over your head."

He lifted the gun slightly in his arms, and as he did so there was a burst of gunfire. A splintered hole appeared like magic in the center of the wooden door. The crash was followed a split second later by a quick succession of pistol shots. Dent flattened himself against the wall.

He waited for a full half minute and then, stepping sideways, kicked the living-room door open with his foot. He was firing the Tommy gun as he walked with even steps into the other room.

Fats Morn stood in the very center of the room. His short, chunky body was in the direct line of fire and he stood wordlessly as the bullets cut a pattern across his wide stomach. His loose mouth fell open and he gave a strangled, half-choked sob as he pitched backward. His head struck the floor with an odd, hollow sound.

Dent's eyes followed the fat man's body as it dropped and he was dimly aware of a piece of green paper, a five-dollar bill, as it listlessly blew across the floor.

He was aware of the child's thin, high scream coming from the other room. It was a cry of fright and not of pain.

His right hand loosened and the submachine gun thudded to the floor. He turned and walked to the front door.

Standing there in the opened doorway, he started to lift his arms over his head.

His eyes were half blinded by the flaming sun coming up out of the east, but he was able to see the three police cars racing toward the house. He didn't see the muzzles of the guns that were pointed directly at him.

He didn't feel it as the leaden barrage cut through his chest and body and he slowly crumpled into the sand.



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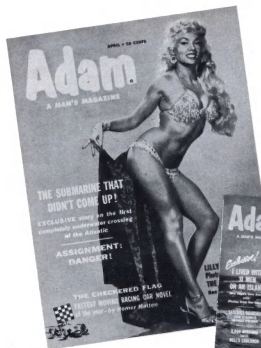
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